Chronicles

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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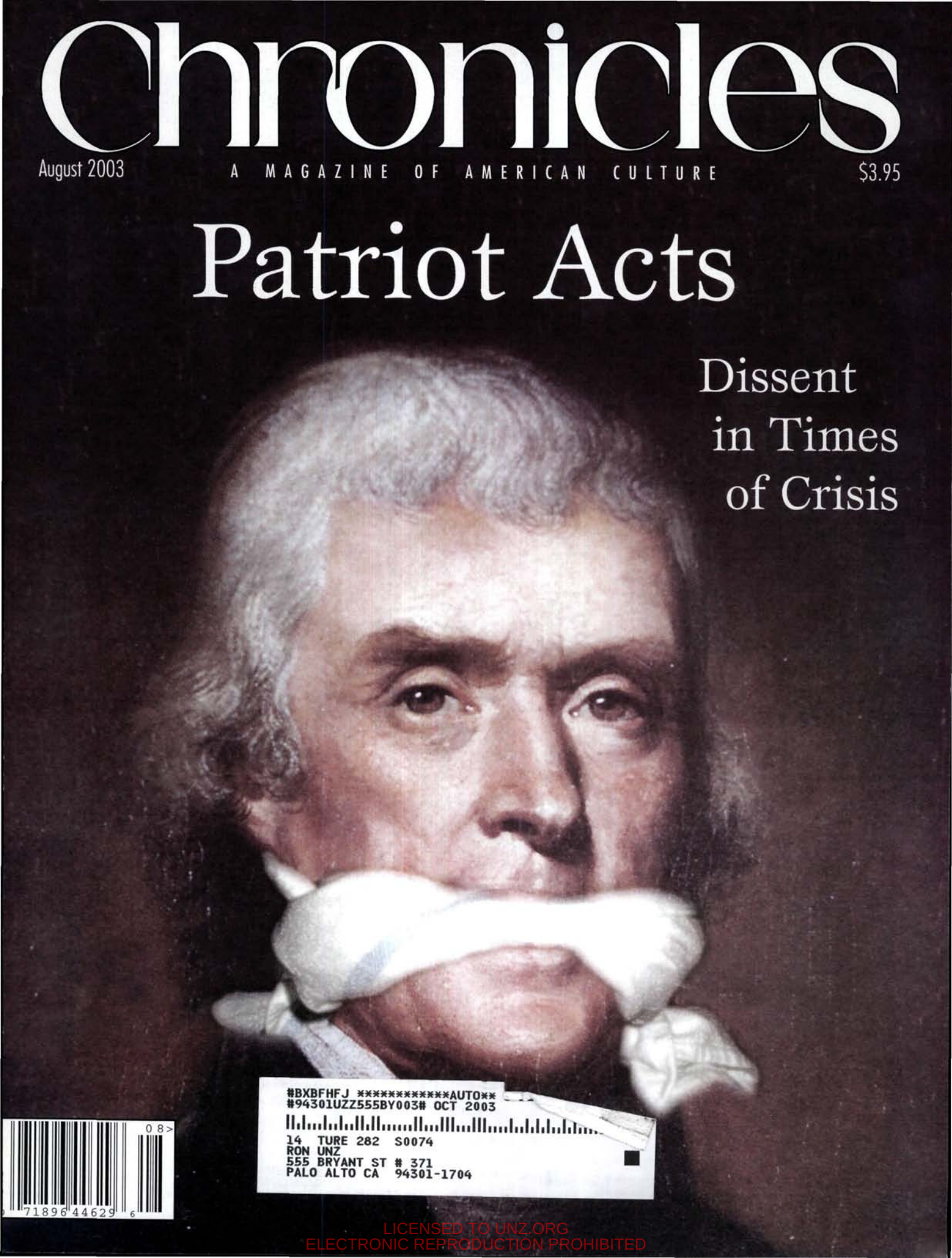

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America, the old saw goes, is an experiment in democracy. Some think the ultimate principles are human rights and multiculturalism—a perpetual revolution to achieve the "proposition" we are supposedly devoted to. Other nations have a history, while America alone is exempt from the laws of human nature. If all this sounds more like a science-fair project than like a real nation, then you should be attending this year's meeting of the John Randolph Club. Our historians and political analysts will probe the European roots of American culture, debunk the multiculturalists and neoconservatives who hate our historic nation, examine the spreading virus of ethnic conflict, and take a candid look at our relations with the nations of Europe.

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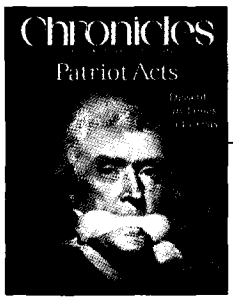

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Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Matthew Rarey
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ART DIRECTOR
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DESIGNER
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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, Paul Gottfried, J.O. Tate, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Wayne Allensworth, Janet Scott Barlow, Bill Kauffman, Donald Livingston, Roger D. McGrath, William Mills, William Murchison, Andrei Navrozov

FILM EDITOR
George McCartney

FOREIGN-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Srdja Trifkovic

LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

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Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On Joe McCarthy

Philip Jenkins' essay about McCarthyism ("Goodbye, Senator McCarthy," *Breaking Glass*, May) was an exercise in retailing received opinions about the Wisconsin senator and his countersubversion efforts.

Without offering specific illustrations, Professor Jenkins execrated Senator McCarthy as "a liar and a jerk of the first order" who conducted a "campaign of name-calling, accusations, and smears . . . vague and unsubstantiated accusations for political ends . . . exploitation of hysterical public fears . . . [and] the reckless persecution of innocent or relatively harmless dissidents."

Whatever one may think of Senator McCarthy's personality, his work as chairman of the Senate Internal Subcommittee on Investigations has been amply vindicated by the release of archival materials from both the U.S. government (especially the VENONA intelligence intercepts) and the former Soviet Union. McCarthy's inquiries, mandated by law and scrupulously conducted within established due-process guidelines, did not target "relatively harmless dissidents"; instead, they focused specifically on federal employees in the executive branch whose actions and affiliations advanced the interests of a hostile foreign power—the Soviet Union.

Hundreds of such individuals were absorbed into the State Department at the end of World War II. As a result, notes Prof. Arthur Herman of George Mason University, communists and Soviet intelligence assets were "handling sensitive documents, assigning staff positions, and preparing reports, even while proof of their unfitness was mired in red tape . . . "

Jenkins insists that, by 1950, the effort "to identify and remove communist supporters" from such positions "was fully accomplished" under Harry Truman. This is flatly untrue. As Professor Herman points out, the Republican "Class of '46" (including McCarthy) successfully campaigned against the Truman administration's refusal to address communist infiltration of the federal government. A 1947 memo from a Senate subcommittee to Secretary of State George C. Marshall protested what it described as "a condition that developed and still flourishes in the State Department under the administration of [State Department official] Dean Acheson. It is evident that there is a deliberate, calculated program being carried out not only to protect Communist personnel in high places but to reduce security and intelligence protection to a nullity. On file in the department is a copy of a preliminary report of the FBI on Soviet espionage activities in the United States which involves a large number of State Department employees, some in high official positions." Senator McCarthy was made aware of the extent of the problem in 1949, when he was given a copy of that report.

Senate Associate Historian Donald Ritchie, editor of the recently released transcripts from the McCarthy committee's executive hearings, is hardly a partisan of the late senator. While criticizing McCarthy for occasionally being "abrasive" in dealing with hostile witnesses, and for "defin[ing] witnesses' constitutional rights narrowly," Ritchie is compelled by the record to admit that the senator "regularly informed witnesses of their right to decline to answer if they felt an answer might incriminate them"; McCarthy, Ritchie continues, also "pointed out that membership in the Communist Party was not a crime."

In *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamining the Life and Work of America's Most Hated Senator*, Professor Herman points out that during the so-called "McCarthy Period"—roughly 1947-54—"no American citizens were interrogated without benefit of legal counsel, none was arrested or detained without due judicial process, and no one went to jail without trial. All through the 'worst' of the McCarthy period, the Communist Party itself was never outlawed, membership in the Party was never declared a crime."

By assuming the thankless task of investigating internal subversion, Senator McCarthy acted on a principle articulated by Supreme Court Justice Fred Vinson: "The First Amendment requires that one be permitted to believe what he will. It does not require that he be permitted to be the keeper of the arsenal."

Professor Jenkins' eagerness to invoke the prevailing caricature of Senator McCarthy's investigative career is immensely disappointing, since his contributions

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to *Chronicles* usually offer correctives to cant and clichés.

—*William Grigg*
Appleton, WI

Dr. Jenkins Replies:

With respect to Mr. Grigg, I disagree with the statement that Senator McCarthy's claims have been vindicated by VENONA.

VENONA indeed showed the truth of many charges made by HUAC during the late 1940's and also confirmed that many other dangerous Soviet agents remained to be tracked down. That is not at issue. Among the targets McCarthy hit with his scattershot approach, he did indeed turn up a couple of genuine Soviet agents. Any good that might have been accomplished by his investigations was, however, countered by the network of false and misleading charges generated at the same time; the failure to distinguish between genuine internal security risks and relatively harmless individuals; and, above all, McCarthy's astonishingly lackadaisical approach to checking out the cases that came before him or even doing the most basic preparation. The net result was to discredit not just himself but the whole process of internal security investigation. We live today with the tragic consequences of that affair.

Mr. Grigg's remarks about legal process are accurate as far as they go, but they neglect the astonishing abuse of First and Fifth Amendment protections at this time. In my view, Dr. Herman thus has an unreasonably rosy view of the legal environment in which the hearings took place. I won't go into the legalities in detail, but, basically, Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination were severely limited by the 1951 *Rogers* case, which concerned a woman who had readily agreed to discuss her own political activities but refused to identify others. The U.S. Supreme Court determined that the witness had "waived her privilege of silence when she freely answered criminating questions relating to her connection with the Communist party," so that she could not refuse to answer later questions about associates. (It was not clear how past membership of a legal organization was "criminating.") That meant, in practice, that you either had to answer *every* question posed by a congressional committee, including questions incriminating friends and family, or plead the Fifth on absolutely everything. The mere act of taking the Fifth made you look like a criminal and would get you fired from most jobs.

I discuss all these issues in more detail in my book *The Cold War at Home* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

On *Marbury* v. *Madison*

A college friend of mine once said that, when she walked out of her last American-history final, she thought she would never again have to wonder what all the fuss was about *Marbury* v. *Madison*. So when I saw Marshall DeRosa's piece "*Marbury* v. *Madison*: The Beginning of Sorrows" (*Views*, May), I thought I would learn more about the fuss. I was disappointed, however, that Professor DeRosa didn't make at all clear what the case was about. *Marbury* v. *Madison* is not concerned with states' rights, as Professor DeRosa asserts, but with a much more prestigious game: Which of the three branches of the federal government has ultimate authority in interpreting the Constitution? Justice Marshall's *tour de force* was in using an apparently trivial matter involving the commission of several minor judicial officials to expand hugely and enduringly the powers of the Supreme Court.

I would also have been interested in getting Professor DeRosa's take on the contradiction at the heart of Marshall's decision. On the one hand, he declared the Supreme Court to be the ultimate arbiter of a law's compliance with the Constitution. On the other, he cited that same declaration as the basis of the Court's authority to make the declaration. Some call that circular reasoning. Others, less judiciously, call it slipping a zinger.

—*Judy Frank Jablow*
New York, New York

Dr. DeRosa Replies:

I failed to "make at all clear what the case was about" because I assumed readers were familiar with the facts, issues, and legal principles of the case. Moreover, the historical circumstances of the case, such as President Adams' attempt to forestall Jeffersonian policies—*i.e.*, states' rights—by his judicial appointments, seemed to be more relevant in 1803 and 2003. For example, imagine if President Jefferson had appointed fellow Virginian St. George Tucker, known as the American Blackstone, to be chief justice. It's a safe bet that American jurisprudence would have taken a somewhat less nationalistic path. Chief Justice Marshall was a hardcore nationalist hell-bent on consolidating power at the national level. The purpose of my essay was to adumbrate (once again, within the scope of a magazine article) that the long-term legacy of *Marbury* v. *Madison* was that it emboldened and empowered the Court to aid and abet nationalism at the expense of genuine federalism. With the benefit of 200 years of hindsight, can one seriously maintain that "*Marbury* v. *Madison* is not concerned with states' rights . . . but with a much more prestigious game: Which of the three branches of the federal government has ultimate authority in interpreting the Constitution?" Which has suffered more at the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court, national legislative and executive powers or states' rights? I rest my case!

On the Rights of Aliens

Stephen B. Presser's "The Rights of Aliens" (*Views*) was right on the mark. Yes, the powers that be want to equalize the rights of citizens and aliens—and eliminate American citizenship as a meaningful concept. This effort flows from two sources: the notion of universal human rights and America as a "proposition nation."

If all humans have an unqualified, unconditional right to certain freedoms, then it is outrageous that any humans should have more rights on the basis of mere citizenship. With meaningless citizenship established, the next step is meaningless nationhood. But don't worry, Americans, our elites have reassured us that our country is nothing so crass as a particular land, culture, people, or history. Gracious, no! We're folks, just like folks everywhere, dedicated to the proposition of libertine freedom and moneymaking. Everybody is really an American. Not everybody knows it yet.

—*John Vinson*
Monterey, VA

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by Thomas Fleming

Giving Aid and Comfort to the Enemy

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Lawrence* v. *Texas* has created panic and confusion among conservatives. They want to support the three conservative justices who dissented from the Supreme Court's ruling that struck down Texas' sodomy statute, but they don't quite know why. Justice Scalia, they say, must be wrong in thinking that a rational distinction can be made between sexual acts practiced by the heterosexual 97 percent of our society and acts practiced by the homosexual three percent: "The Texas law says that gays cannot do what non-gays can do." Furthermore, the Texas law could not be defended with states-rights arguments, since the Court had already assumed (in *Bowers*, 1986) the power to meddle in such matters.

This was, in essence, the reasoning (if it can be called that) of Justice Anthony Kennedy in writing the decision. Arguing from the basis of "equality of treatment and the due process right to demand respect for conduct protected by the substantive guarantee of liberty," Kennedy concludes that "moral disapproval of a group cannot be a legitimate government interest." Sodomy statutes, he argues, are not just about sex: "When sexuality finds overt expression in intimate conduct with another person, the conduct can be but one element in a personal bond that is more enduring." If Kennedy thinks intimate conduct is only one element in an enduring personal bond, he must know very little of either prostitution or of the "gay" lifestyle, which encourages homosexuals to have, literally, hundreds of partners in the course of a single year.

It is clear, from the nature of Kennedy's argument, that Justice Thomas was correct in predicting that *Lawrence* will open the door to homosexual marriage. Leftists know this and say so. Conservative supporters of the decision know it, too, but they prefer to say they do not.

The *Lawrence* decision is the usual farrago of potted history, bad logic, and false consciousness that we are used to in Supreme Court decisions, and it reveals the shallowness and ignorance of the men and women who control the destiny of our country. After an historical survey of sodomy legislation that might have been drafted by NAMBLA or Lambda, Kennedy can find no better argument than the principle of equality. If person A may perform a certain act with person B, then persons C through Z have the right to do the same.

To realize how zany the argument is, apply the reasoning to other cases. In forbidding adultery, incest, and statutory rape, state governments forbid some people to do what others are allowed to do (namely, perform acts of consensual sex). In forbidding strangers to spank rude children while allowing such punishments to be performed by parents; in allowing some people over 18 (citizens) but not others (aliens) to vote; in allowing priests to preserve the secrets of the confessional, *etc.*, governments are denying "equality of treatment" and "the due process right to demand respect."

In *Lawrence*, observes Justice Scalia, the Supreme Court has taken sides in the culture war—the revolutionary side. Although sodomy laws often did apply to members of both sexes and to married couples, the Christian religion has always stigmatized homosexuality—not just behavior but the inclination—as evil and unnatural. Now, it is true that even in the most rigorous Christian societies, a distinction can and should be drawn between sin and crime. Pride, envy, and disloyalty may be more sinful than adultery and homicide, but the former are typically ignored, while the latter are punished severely, often capitally. Most Christian societies, however, have punished notorious cases of homosexuality with rigor, partly out of a desire to extirpate a vice so closely connected with paganism and partly in order to discourage homosexuals from recruiting young men and destroying, so it is believed, their chances of salvation. What Kennedy and the conservatives are saying is not only that Christian morality is a minority position in the United States (which it is) but that it is bunk and always has been.

Although it is a mistake to reduce all political conflicts to questions of principle, *Lawrence* represents a self-evidently absurd ideology that conservatives have very unwisely embraced: the abstract principle of equality, which not only supersedes but positively eliminates the reality of human differences based on sex, kinship, marriage, nationality, religion, and morality. Throughout human history (and prehistory), these particular relationships were at the heart of all moral and political understanding, until they began to be undermined by political dreamers during the Renaissance and Enlightenment. But even in the past three centuries, no government—not even communist Russia or Nazi Germany—succeeded in eliminating them. Only revolutionary liberals (some of whom now call themselves "conservative") have been so bold.

The Texas statute was not "silly" (Justice Thomas's adjective) when it was passed, and it is not silly now. Even if it were, "the Constitution of the United States," as Sam Ervin used to say, "gives every man the right to make a damn fool of himself," and, as Senator Sam would have added, it gives that same right to every state. But in the revolutionary America defended by conservatives, neither the Constitution nor Christian morality is of any account.

This is an important lesson for Christians to learn. On every important moral and social principle, the three branches of the U.S. government are supporting the cultural revolution that the left has been waging since even before Robespierre substituted the worship of "The Supreme Being" for the Christian religion. The *Lawrence* decision was written by a Reagan appointee and supported by a Bush appointee (David Souter), a Ford appointee (John Paul Stevens), and an Orrin Hatch appointee (Ruth Bader Ginsburg). Sandra Day O'Connor, also a Reagan appointee, while not entirely agreeing with Kennedy's reasoning, also voted with the majority.

There are many sound reasons for voting Republican in elections, but resisting the cultural revolution is not one of them. We live not in a degenerate pagan society whose individuals are open to moral and spiritual conversion but in a post-Christian society whose every principle is opposed to us. No election will change that reality. c

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MONKEYS—when you consider how many subspecies of them are native to Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois—were sure to cause an epidemic of some kind in the Upper Midwest. In fact, monkeypox has been traced to prairie dogs sold as house pets after being infected by a single imported specimen of the giant Gambian rat, a three-pound rodent Godzilla being held in captivity by Phil's Pocket Pets in Villa Park, Illinois. As of this writing, 82 people in five states have contracted the illness, and an entire family has been quarantined for the duration.

Prairie dogs, African gerbils, African dwarf hedgehogs, Gambian rats; camelpox, cowpox, skunkpox, raccoonpox, rabbitpox, birdpox, mousepox, monkeypox; West Nile Virus . . . we finally have a pet and virus profile in the United States that looks like America, and American epidemiology obediently reflects the trend. So many exotic creatures and diseases, from *everywhere*! Diversity is our strength, now more than ever. (Except in the national forests, where good ol' boys bearing arms are compelled by law to feed certified weed-free hay at six or seven dollars per bale to their horses: The Department of Agriculture learned a lesson from a mistake by the Department of the Interior, which, a century ago, imported from Asia a bush called "salt cedar" that, in addition to controlling erosion, is busy choking off and drinking up every free-flowing river across the Western states.) I myself keep three Patagonian conures and one Nanday in the house, plus a large family of illegal Chinese immigrants hiding out in the basement, and have been down three times with psittacosis and once with TB; currently, I'm being treated for SARS. (The cultural enrichment I receive makes it all more than worthwhile, though.)

Monkeypox, originally identified in monkeys in 1959, was proved in 1970 to be infectious for humans. Less dangerous than smallpox, which has a 30-percent mortality rate, monkeypox is deadly in only one to ten percent of cases reported from Africa, where an outbreak of the disease occurred in the Congo in the 1990's. The World Health Organization suspects that a cavalier attitude toward smallpox vaccination might be responsible for the virus having taken a strong hold within the human population, monkeypox and smallpox being closely related. Unfortunately, the resumption of vaccine programs in Africa is infeasible, owing to the widespread incidence of a preexisting condition of AIDS on the Dark Continent, which makes the monkeypox vaccination highly dangerous to a significant percentage of the population. In the United States, where AIDS is (still) much less of a scourge, an aggressive campaign on the part of the Department of Homeland Security (Quarantine America!) can be counted on to nip monkeypox in the bud, the way the Chinese government handled SARS last spring.

That leaves only the threat to America's prairie dogs to be considered. That is a big *only*, however, since the varmints have lately become a *cause célèbre* with environmentalists eager to protect them from marauding rednecks with target rifles. *Que faire?* You can't say "no" to anyone or anything from Gambia. On the other hand, if the prairie dog community across America suffers a massive die-off, what becomes of the rationale for separating rednecks from their guns?

Life in America was so simple, once . . .

—*Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

THE E.U. CONSTITUTION, drafted by a committee chaired by former French "conservative" president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, debuted on June 10. With a metaphysical sweep worthy of Hegel, d'Estaing described the 75-page document as "an edifice, a construction, an equilibrium, a balance . . . a synthesis." Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," the anthem of the European Union, accompanied the official presentation of the draft prepared by a 15-member "Presidency" representing 105 members of the Convention on the Future of Europe.

The insane finale of the *Ninth Symphony* should make any sensible person wary of any event it adorns (such as Hitler's birthdays and East German state ceremonies), and the launching of the E.U. constitution was no exception. Both in sentiment and in style, its Preamble could have been composed by a Jacobin fanatic two centuries ago. It defines the fundamental values of "Europe" as *humanism*, *equality of persons*, *freedom*, and *respect for reason*. It refers to "the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe" and upholds "the central role of the human person and his inviolable and inalienable rights." It heralds Europe's continued march along the "path of civilization, progress and prosperity, for the good of all its inhabitants, including the weakest and most deprived" and celebrates "social progress . . . peace, justice and solidarity throughout the world."

In other words, united Europe's draft constitution is a radically secularist, progressivist, militantly humanist, anti-Christian, modernist document. Its refusal to make even a passing reference to Christianity is "an offense to reason, to good sense, and to a good part of Europe's citizens," said Roberto Cardinal Tucci, the president of Vatican Radio. Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski, an avowed atheist who leads a strongly Catholic country, called the godless tone of the constitution "shameful."

Such voices have remained isolated and ineffective, however. Most "conservative" parties and politicians all over Europe chose to ignore the Preamble and professed relief that the document is not as centralist in spirit and letter as the antifederalists had feared it might be. The European Union will have a "legal personality" and a president, but the dreaded term *federal* has been dropped in favor of the more vague *Community way*. The European Union's current designation will not be changed to "United Europe," and Article 1 recognizes that the Union derives its power and authority from the member states. The new post of E.U. "foreign minister" (perhaps under a different designation) will combine the roles currently played by Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Commissioner Javier Solana and External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten, but the position will not have any additional powers. There will be no qualified majority voting over the CFSP: Intergovernmental procedures will continue to rule most, if not all, policy decisions.

In reality, the beleaguered Euroskeptics have little to celebrate. Article 10 establishes the primacy of E.U. law over national law, and Article 15 hints at supranationalism by obliging member states to support "actively and unreservedly . . . the Union's common foreign and security policy in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity." In the economic sphere, "The

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Union shall have competence to co-ordinate the economic and employment policies of the member states."

More significantly, a Charter of Fundamental Rights forms the entire second part of the document—and it presents as great a threat to national sovereignty as any overt federalist declaration. It mandates equality and nondiscrimination (and includes references to homosexuals); it combats "social exclusion" and upholds "diversity." The new constitution and E.U. law are to have "primacy over the law of member states," formally elevating the Union above national constitutions and parliaments. Member states can only act "to the extent that the Union has not exercised, or has decided to cease exercising, its competence." The European Court will have the power, under Article 28, to "ensure respect for the Constitution and Union law" and to rule on compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The draft was approved by E.U. leaders at the summit in Salonika, and its details will be discussed by an intergovernmental conference this fall. Formal approval will come sometime after May 1 of next year, when the next round of E.U. enlargement is supposed to take place. While the constitution may be subjected to a popular vote, Brussels will remain inherently bureaucratic rather than democratic, reflecting the aspirations and interests of the postnational, post-Christian ruling elites rather than those of the people.

"Where are our principles?"—the perennial lament among conservatives of old—is no longer heard among Europe's morphed Tories, Christian Democrats, and Gaullists. The failure of Europe's nominal conservatives to fight the document will help push the Old Continent further along the path of moral, spiritual, and demographic self-liquidation.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

THE SUPREME COURT's ruling allowing affirmative action at the University of Michigan but striking down the school's system of racial quotas led Linda Chavez, in a syndicated column entitled "Supreme Mischief and Racism" (June 26), to warn against desecrating a sacred vision. Forty years ago this August, "the Rev. Martin Luther King gave a speech that galvanized Americans of all races." His invocation of a color-blind society "launched a civil rights revolution that was embraced by the American people and led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. As a result America today is a more just society." What made King's message compelling was his hope that "people will not be judged by the color of their skin." Therefore, it is "ludicrous" that a majority of the Court would allow the use of race as a "plus factor" for the evaluation of undergraduate candidates at the University of Michigan.

Among the problems with this reasoning is the staggering juridical importance given to Martin Luther King, Jr. Tatters of his speeches may sound fine, but they do not constitute the document under which the American regime was founded and by which it is supposedly governed. Moreover, it is simply untrue that King devoted his life to opposing affirmative action. King emphatically endorsed the distribution of jobs and other economic opportunities on the basis of racial representation. He asserted that (and more) in a 1965 *Playboy* interview. The decision by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is totally consistent with the expressed views of King and of civil-rights activists Thurgood Marshall, Whitney Young, Julian Bond, and Maynard Jackson.

Los Angeles Times polls of February 6 and June 26 indicate that two thirds of the respondents resist out-and-out quotas, yet the overwhelming majority expressed deep concern about prejudice directed against racial, "gender," and ethnic minorities. These respondents accepted the awarding of preferences but insisted on having them go to "those who are economically deprived." In this case, what people actually think is less important than what they *profess* to want. The profession indicates what they assume to be the moral high ground. This, of course, has nothing to do with the reality that hits us in the face, one in which black bigotry can be vented freely in universities and in entertainment, while those ultimate victimizers—white Christian males—are increasingly restricted in what they are allowed to say about other groups.

Such behavior is not to be wondered at in a society that Chavez finds more "just" than it used to be—that is, one invaded by government social engineers. What is surprising is that someone who celebrates the major bureaucratic intrusions of the 60's, together with the demographic reconstruction of the country, should treat affirmative action as a "ludicrous" departure from other developments to which it is clearly related. Does Chavez honestly believe that a decade that witnessed a remaking of the American people by bureaucratic agencies would not end, as it did, by imposing racial quotas? Who would stop this from happening? Certainly not newly mobilized black voters or Hispanic immigrants, who would be the beneficiaries of quotas.

What the Supreme Court did was to prohibit explicit racial quotas of the kind that the University of Michigan Law School applied to its candidates for admission. No attempt was made to keep the voters of Michigan or of any other state from banning racial or sex preferences. Nothing the Court did can keep us from voting for presidential candidates who, unlike Al Gore and George W. Bush, come out foursquare against affirmative action. Unfortunately, many of those now grumbling wish to have it both ways—to be able to vote for affirmative-action maniacs, such as Al Gore, or klutzy equivocators, such as President Bush, while getting the Court to decide the matter without regard to the electoral will. Arguably, the American people should be forced to stew in their own juices. Perhaps they will come to view quotas, by whatever name, as being as much of a wedge issue as prescription drugs, or they may be jerked into behaving like their Australian "democratic" cousins, who now have extended special rights to Muslims as well as to gays and Aborigines. Let those who vote decide for themselves. Just don't expect the courts to let irresponsible voters off the hook, and don't fabricate counterhistorical civil-rights movements by imputing to the dead political positions they never held.

—*Paul Gottfried*

STROM THURMOND, R.I.P. J. Strom Thurmond died on June 27, answering that last great Roll Call in the Sky at the age of 100, shortly after finishing out a half-century in the U.S. Senate. He won his first election before Bill Clinton and Junior Bush were born. He spent the last period of his life in his native place, the Black Belt town of Edgefield, South Carolina. (Can anyone imagine Bob Dole going back to Kansas or the Kennedys to Brookline?)

Aside from the third of the population made up of recently arrived Mexicans and Rust Belt refugees, there is no one in South Carolina who did not know Strom personally. (I met him, through no effort

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of my own, two weeks after arriving in the state in 1971.) He was known by his Christian name as readily and familiarly as anybody in these parts since Elvis. There is a genuine feeling of loss at his passing, though it has long been anticipated. He outlived several groomed successors.

Thurmond was liked by the people not because he was a "conservative," although he vaguely symbolized the visceral conservatism of the population. There were few constituents who had not received from him personal assistance in some encounter with the many-headed federal beast.

A graduate of Clemson College back when the all-male students were still uniformed "cadets," Thurmond began his career in local politics. During World War II, he resigned a judgeship to join the service. (At the same time, Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson were maneuvering to get out of the service and into office.) At the age of 41, he rode a glider into Normandy on D-Day and returned with numerous decorations. Thurmond belonged to those several generations of Southerners who considered the Armed Forces to be the heart of manhood and patriotism. Like most such, he continued to be a strong supporter of "defense" spending long after the forces had ceased to embody either of those qualities.

Thurmond was elected governor of South Carolina in 1946. He was soon thrust—or thrust himself—onto the national scene. Southerners came back from the war flush with patriotism and barely aware of the fact that they were being set up as the next official enemy of the United States. They soon learned, however, as the Democratic Party began to reject its traditional Southern base. (The Republican Party, always 50 years behind on the leftward trajectory, is presently attempting the same maneuver.)

Out of the postwar "civil-rights" revolution in the Democratic party came the States' Rights Democratic Party of 1948, with Governor Thurmond as its presidential candidate. He carried four states and over a million votes—more than the liberals' darling, Henry Wallace—and gathered a small but significant following beyond the Potomac, including Robert Lee Frost and the young Murray Rothbard.

Illustrating Americans' terminal ignorance of history, the media obits have made much of the point that Thurmond was once a segregationist and an opponent of "civil rights" but had undergone a reformation. It sounds as though segregation were some inexplicable personal shortcoming rather than the law and the overwhelming preference of millions of white Southerners (and of most Northerners in practice, if not in theory). A survivor like Thurmond will naturally adapt to changed circumstances.

From the early 1970's on, his appointment of black staffers and outreach to black constituents reflected the common experience of the South, especially the inevitable submission to the federal juggernaut and white Southerners' good manners and basic good will toward black Southerners. Like most of us, Thurmond accepted in good faith the conditions that Northerners had imposed out of abstract righteousness and absentee moralism. (Massachusetts, New York, and Illinois are still the most segregated states.)

In 1954, Thurmond became the only senator in American history to be elected as a write-in candidate. In the 1960's, he garnered more national attention as a feisty opponent of the fashionable radical legislation of the day. He broke the record for filibusters and challenged his opponents to an arm-wrestling contest. (There were no takers, if I remember correctly.) He got further attention by a timely switch from Democrat to Republican during the Goldwater episode.

The Great Society changed American government forever, making the feds the font of all blessings in nearly every realm of life. Thurmond and other Southerners who wanted to stay in power joined the new regime, which transformed members of Congress from representatives of the people to middlemen for the government's payoffs to the people. If Northern Republicans and Democrats insisted on voting for vast spending programs, then a rational Southern response was to get a good place at the trough and pipe as many goodies as possible back to the homefolks.

Strom's patronage machine worked so well that it kept running long after he had slipped into dozing senility. That is not to be despised, considering the cookie-cutter country-club Republicans that are likely to succeed him for the foreseeable future. Nor was it without some positive benefits: Federal judges in these regions are not generally the crazed *gauleiters* who flourish elsewhere in the country. Strom was one of the few Southerners to use the Republicans more than they used him.

Thurmond, at least according to legend, suffered in high degree from the politician's common malady of testicular hyperactivity; his reported early exploits make Bill Clinton look like an amateur. At 49, he married a young beauty queen; at 68, a 22-year-old coed. In later years, his affinity for the fairer sex took on a relatively harmless—if slightly comic—courtliness. My most vivid memory of him comes from the Clarence Thomas hearings. When Strom addressed some of the witnesses as "ladies," he was taken to task by a feminist virago, doubtless from Massachusetts—the last soiled tatters of Western civilization in America *versus* a triumphant New World Order.

—*Clyde Wilson*

OBITER DICTA: Our poetry this month is provided by **Richard Moore** from Belmont, Massachusetts. Mr. Moore is the author of nine books of poetry, as well as translations of Plautus and Euripides, a book of literary essays, and a novel, *The Investigator*. His most recent book of verse, *The Naked Scarecrow*, was published by the Truman State University Press in 2000. Mr. Moore conducts *The Poetry Exchange* in the Harvard COOP and gives frequent readings in the Boston area.

Our art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

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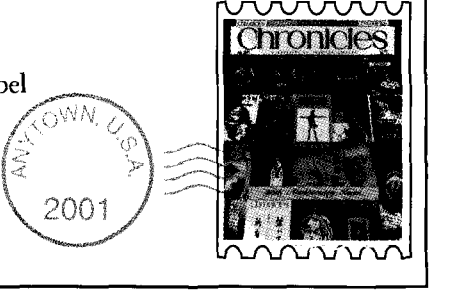

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by Thomas Fleming

Loyal Opposition

In the two years since Muslim terrorists murdered over 3,000 of our citizens on September 11, Americans have been taking one side or the other in the debate between the partisans of security and public order, led by Attorney General John Ashcroft, and the partisans of free speech, championed by the ACLU and other groups promoting civil liberties and "human rights." This debate was intensified by the U.S. decision to invade Iraq and by the admittedly small-scale demonstrations mounted by the far left. It is not doing too much of an injustice to characterize the Ashcroft position as the declaration of an unprecedented state of emergency in which some traditional and constitutional liberties must be suspended for the common good and to characterize the ACLU position as the insistence that the rights of free speech, free press, and public assembly take precedence over any threat to national security, especially when that threat has been exaggerated for political purposes. Although I have no sympathy for the ACLU or its argument, we need to preserve our moral balance. Bruce Ackerman, in a recent article in the *American Prospect*, makes the obvious comparison with the homicidal mania we tolerate on a daily basis:

> Last year there were 16,000 murders in the United States. Yet the FBI doesn't issue orange alerts in response to chatter on gangland cell phones threatening an escalation of murderous hits; it simply beefs up its activities in sensible ways.

In an earlier generation, we might have tried to resolve this issue by appealing to the Constitution and to its sovereign interpreters, the nine political lawyers sitting on the Supreme Court, but, as we have shown in *Chronicles* a few months ago, the Constitution means something quite different today from what it meant to the Framers and, indeed, from what it meant in the days of Grover Cleveland. We can never go back to the 1880's, much less the 1780's, and a solution to this dilemma cannot profitably be sought in an examination of how free Americans once exercised their liberties in the Old Republic. That Old Republic died before I was born, and there is little that any of us can do to change it.

The principles of ordered liberty (to borrow a popular conservative expression) embedded in the Constitution are an expression of an Anglo-American political tradition that emphasized the importance of individual liberty (as explained by the theory of natural rights) and the necessity of public order. Since the Constitution was itself more of a contract among sovereign states than a national constitution in the modern French or American sense, it did not have to spell out much in the way of moral, social, or political principles. The exception is the Bill of Rights, which was demanded as a means of curbing the extension of federal power. Throughout most of our history, however, the Bill of Rights has been used to expand federal power at the expense not only of the original parties to the constitutional contract (the states) but even of the more significant constituent bodies of society—namely, the family, churches, and neighborhoods.

Members of authentic communities rarely speak of their individual rights or their claims against that community. In the case of a church parish, the use of such language threatens the very existence of the parish, and the constant harping on rights and the counter-harping on national security is destroying whatever is left of national unity. There are more things at stake than the Justice Department's prurient interest in your e-mail or in your right to read pornography, and little good can come out of a debate whose question is posed in such trivializing terms. To return to a sane understanding of the citizen—both his rights and his duties—we shall not get very far by repeating the now-exploded social theories of John Locke or Jeremy Bentham. Let us take the radical step of looking beyond the narrow horizons of the American imperium (as it is now the fashion to describe it) and consider a not-so-hypothetical example of a famous political dissident who was executed for his frankness.

The death of Socrates is usually portrayed as martyrdom to the principle of free speech. It was nothing of the kind, as Socrates said himself. The protagonist of this tragedy is Socrates, and the antagonists are not his accusers Anytus, Meletus, and Lycon (mere supernumeraries) but the city of Athens. To understand what happened in the spring of 399 B.C., we have to know something of the life stories of the two principals. Let us start with the older one, the city.

According to local tradition, the ancient city of Athens had never been conquered or occupied by an invader. The Athenians were, so they believed, *autochthonous* (literally, they sprang from the soil of Attica) and therefore not subject to the same class warfare that wreaked havoc in cities seized by Dorian tribes who reduced the natives to serfdom. Athens had been deeply troubled in the sixth century, when economic crises reduced a significant part of the population to debt-slavery, and the dictatorships or emergency governments of Solon, Peisistratus, and Cleisthenes were aimed, at least in part, at solving economic problems and healing social divisions. After 500, Athens was increasingly unified, and, in the crisis of the Persian Wars (including Athens' campaigns to liberate Greeks living on the islands and on Asia Minor), they hit upon ostracism as a means of eliminating dissension. Politicians who made themselves too prominent in opposition might find themselves, for no good reason beyond the unity of the city, sent into exile.

As Athens became more democratic in form, the city became more and more subject to ambitious demagogues such as Pericles and men far worse than he. Pericles' brilliant kinsman Alcibiades courted the mob, despised their religion, and, when his intemperate behavior got him into trouble, betrayed his country to the Spartans. An aristocratic coalition took advantage of the troubled days of Athenian defeat and established a moderate oligarchy, which was taken over by the extreme elements, the so-called Thirty, led by Critias. Critias was a Nietzschean immoralist who believed that religion and morality were invented by the weak to prevent the strong from enjoying power. He and his thugs accused rich men of

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various crimes, executed them, and stole their property. However, when the democracy returned—and the most guilty of the criminals had been killed or exiled—most Athenians were more interested in restoring unity than in seeking revenge from those who had collaborated with the Thirty.

Socrates had lived through these stirring times. Born in 469, ten years after the defeat of the Persians at Plataea, he had practiced his father's trade of stonecutter and sculptor but began spending more and more of his time in philosophical study and discussion. His method, as described by Plato and Xenophon (and Aristophanes), was a kind of negative dialectic in which he stripped his hearers of their conventional opinions and left them with nothing better. At the beginning of one of these *aporetic* dialogues, the student will express himself confidently on the subject of courage, for example, but, by the end, he can only confess his complete ignorance. The so-called experts—poets, generals, statesmen, sophists—always turn out to be wrong, but it is not until the middle dialogues of Plato (which may or may not reflect the master's teaching) that we find the remedy to our dilemma: an absolute standard of goodness or beauty or courage, which our everyday virtues reflect, albeit poorly.

The Socratic method, though it leads ultimately to higher truth, can have a very demoralizing effect on the students whose inherited opinions it undermines, and Aristophanes (in the *Clouds*) took it seriously enough to single out Socrates for corrupting young men and teaching them to disrespect their parents. Plato, at least, seems to think the play helped turn public opinion against Socrates.

Socrates did not need Aristophanes as an accuser, however, since his students and associates proved to be so troublesome to Athens: the degenerate traitor Alcibiades; the Nazi thugs Critias and Charmides (Plato's uncles); and even Meno the Thessalian, described in charming terms by Plato but revealed by Xenophon as a master of corruption, greed, and treachery. Socrates had remained in Athens while the Thirty were in power, though he says he refused to do their bidding. Nonetheless, though by law Socrates could not be prosecuted for his friendship with Critias, he could be tried on such other charges as atheism and (closer to the point) corrupting the young.

The trial of Socrates is not the case of the Athenian state *versus* an individual named Socrates. There is no Athenian state, only a few rough-hewn mechanisms expressing the will (and the whims) of the Athenian people. The hundreds of ordinary people sitting on juries, more than the assembly of the people, were the real foundation of Athenian democracy. A small group of fellow citizens brought the charges, but it was the people of Athens who tried and condemned him.

Socrates did not defend himself on the grounds that intellectuals should be free to express their opinions. He was innocent, he argued, but, if he were guilty as charged, the Athenians would be right to put him to death. In the *Crito*, he is presented with an opportunity to escape, which he rejects. The city is wrong on the facts, but it has the right to take the life of a citizen, even wrongly. What could he say, he wonders, to the *nomoi* (laws and traditions) of Athens if he bolted? That he was wrongly condemned? Would not the *nomoi* respond by asking him if he repudiated the laws that made possible his parents' marriage and his own birth and upbringing and even his education?

The *nomoi* explain that the *patris*, the sum of all the ancestors and descendants of this generation of citizens, takes precedence over the individual citizen. Socrates the Athenian philosopher would never have existed had there been no Athens to nurture his identity. He is a link in a chain that forms a web of relationships that demand his loyalty. Outside of this web of culture and kinship, he makes no sense.

The argument of the *nomoi* is the correct answer not only to the civil libertarian argument of individual rights but to the doctrine of *suprema lex salus publica*. Socrates is not executed by "the state" (the concept has no meaning in fifth-century Athens); he goes willingly to meet his death rather than betray the past and future generations of his people. Such a principle of self-sacrifice, however, can only be applied to communities of loyalty (such as Josiah Royce described), not to such abstractions as "the human race," "the European Union," or even a North American Free Trade Association. The citizen-body of Attica, which many feared was already too large, was measured in the tens of thousands. In the Socratic sense, it is very difficult to be loyal to a faraway government—the few thousand officials who rule over nearly 300 million people strung out in cities and towns across a continent. We might, however, display such loyalty (though few of us do) in our own hometowns, whose powers have been stripped away by the powerful men who control state and federal governments.

Politicians in Washington tell us we should be loyal to what they call "the American way of life"; if that phrase means anything, however, it should refer to the customs, religion, and culture of the British and European settlers who came to the New World and replanted their traditions in fresh soil, where they yielded a rich harvest. If we are to trust the politicians, we should be loyal to the Christian religion, Western culture, European peoples, and the Anglo-American language, political institutions, and legal traditions.

But all of these are under constant assault from the state and federal government agencies that are now demanding our loyalty. Christians cannot pray in the schools they pay for with their taxes or pretend that their traditions are equal (much less superior) to the religions and cultures of devil-worshipers, cannibals, polygamists, female-circumcisers, wife-burners, and child-sacrificers. Americans not only must bow to the superiority of non-Western cultures; they also have to import their representatives in such large numbers as to threaten the bare survival of their own people and culture.

In the long run, the debate between the Department of Justice and the ACLU is trivial: Both are staffed by the dogged enemies of America's cultural and religious heritage. The deeper problem is the destruction of that sense of community that demands our loyalty. At this point, it is futile to expect the governments in Washington or in the states to give up their campaign to eradicate the vestiges of the West from American soil, much less to nurture and protect the Christian Faith. We are, nonetheless, subject to the rulers of this earth and should not be found wanting in our duties as subjects. But government, which can command our monies and our lives, cannot command our hearts, and those we should give to the institutions that command our loyalty—our families, the little communities of shop and school, and the Church. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"—even if you remain a republican loyal to the Rome of the Catos—"and unto God the things that are God's."

Read Thomas Fleming's
HARD Right
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The Alternative

by Richard Moore

1

By telephone, in person, mail,
you tell the truth or make the sale.
Some can by clever turns and twists
do both, say sentimentalists.
Their faith touches us, is undying
and cleverer than outright lying.

2

Down through the centuries
thus brings us to our knees
the curse
we call commerce,

which most since Adam's fall
makes liars of us all,
wrecks arts
and poisons hearts

until the world around us,
which once had power to sound us,
in hates
evaporates.

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by Philip Jenkins

How Erewhon Ended Ethnic Profiling

Let me apologize. A massive technical glitch, involving distortions of the fourth dimension, has prevented me from researching the column I intended to write about ethnic and racial profiling. The column would have pointed out that many people who complain about profiling fail to define just what the term means. They confuse blatant examples of crude racial discrimination—police stopping people solely on the basis of "Driving While Black"—with the intelligent and selective use of race and ethnicity as crucial factors in criminal investigation. Some critics, the truly disingenuous, use the language of "profiling" to denounce the disparate effects of criminal-justice operations. If black people are imprisoned at four or five times their presence in the overall population, this must be entirely the result of selective racial victimization.

Using these careless definitions, *profiling* has become a codeword for all manner of racial inequities in law enforcement. Responding to these concerns, the Justice Department has now issued guidelines prohibiting federal agents from using race or ethnicity in routine investigations, though they may do so in cases involving terrorism and threats to national security. This last point remains controversial, and the issue should be a major item in the 2004 Democratic platform.

As I said, however, I am unable to write that column. What happened was this: In looking for background on profiling, I ordered a copy of the latest *Almanac of American Politics*. Because of a mix-up at *Amazon.com*, though, I was accidentally sent a copy from an alternate world, where the current of reality diverged from our own. Just out of curiosity, anyway, I now present the discussion that the alternative *Almanac* offers on the profiling issue.

* * *

"Now that ethnic profiling has become the decisive political theme it has, it is difficult to recall what a fringe issue this was before the epoch-making events of September 2001. Though the September-gate story has been told often enough, we must still be startled at the astonishingly bigoted behavior of the administration and the federal justice agencies. Their official rationale was this: The FBI and CIA had come to believe that Islamic terrorists were planning to use aircraft in a massive terrorist attack on U.S. soil; that some of their militants were already in the United States; and that they had received training in flying large airliners. Putting two and two together, federal agencies decided that Middle Eastern terrorists planned to crash several hijacked airliners into major buildings, including the World Trade Center, the Capitol, and the Pentagon. Responding to this far-fetched notion, the FBI searched the records of U.S. flight schools to find Arab or Middle Eastern men who had received training in the previous two or three years and placed these individuals under surveillance. Airports were given strict instructions to search anyone on the official watch-list and to look especially for edged weapons. On September 10, 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the arrest of 20 Arab men, chiefly from Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

"Initially, the media paid polite attention to the news, but, over the following weeks, interest gave way to derision. On the comedy programs, Leno and Letterman ridiculed the idea of these 'losers'—who could not even afford real weapons—trying to hijack an airliner, let alone knowing what to do with it once they had done so. *Saturday Night Live* reconstructed the event in an hilarious sketch, with shrieking turbaned Arabs running into cockpits, armed with tiny plastic scissors. Hundreds of thousands signed a humorous e-mail petition circulated nationwide, declaring support for anyone prepared to blow up the Pentagon. And, as all the experts made clear, even if an airliner succeeded in approaching the World Trade Center, an impact would have had no effect whatever on the building's structural soundness.

"But humor soon turned to fury, as financial and corporate scandals erupted and the public came to suspect the cynical agenda motivating the persecution of the hapless Arab suspects. In an ominous sign for the administration, the 1998 movie *Wag the Dog* became a huge video-rental hit, reminding audiences of how a fictional president used mythical foreign conspiracies as a means of distracting attention from his own scandalous misdeeds. The perception that charges had been trumped-up was confirmed when millions watched Larry King's interview with Mohammed Atta, following his release on bail. At first hand, the audience saw that such a gentle, pious soul could never be a terrorist.

"Meanwhile, congressional investigators focused on the blatant and unapologetic uses of ethnic profiling by the FBI and CIA. In blatantly discriminatory terms, agents were told to watch for 'Arab and Middle Eastern' men attending flight schools; they were told to exercise surveillance over 'Arabs' boarding planes in groups and even to prevent them from boarding. Some harrowing documents told agents to seek out 'radical Muslim' extremists, confirming charges of religious bigotry. When former President Clinton spoke of the naked discrimination displayed in the arrest of the September 10 suspects, he remarked that 'Freedom itself was attacked that morning, and freedom will be defended.' Finding so many smoking guns, liberal and left-wing campaigns succeeded in forcing the resignations of John Ashcroft and CIA Director George Tenet. Activists also used the September 10 scandal to raise public consciousness of bias in the justice system, and sweeping legislation prohibited all use of racial or ethnic data in criminal investigation. Issues of bias and discrimination profoundly damaged the Republicans in the 2002 midterm elections, which left George W. Bush a lame duck facing likely impeachment.

"By bringing racial discrimination to the foreground of American political debate, September 10 had a truly incalculable effect on the nation's public life. It brought home to us once and for all that America holds no values higher than protecting ethnic minorities against an out-of-control justice system."

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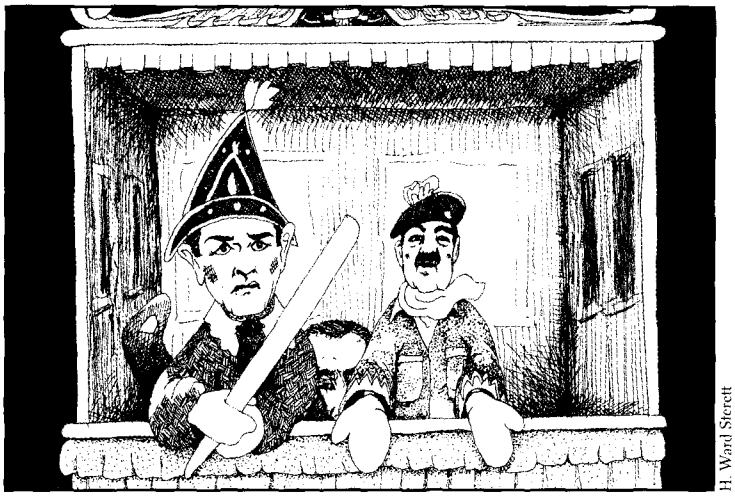
The Real War

Saying Our Peace

by Wayne Allensworth



H. Ward Sterett

In a small café in Belgrade nearly 20 years ago, I had a drink with a young man named Michael. He was an architect and, like many people I met there, was no friend of the Soviet regime, which was the subject of our conversation. I had just visited the Soviet Union, passing through Belgrade on the way back to America.

In the course of our conversation, the nature of propaganda—especially Soviet propaganda—came up. Michael was a very perceptive young man who did not buy his own government's propaganda any more than he did the Soviet line, which he mocked, especially the part about how Soviet soldiers were doing their "internationalist duty" in Afghanistan. The scenes of grateful Afghans throwing flowers at the "internationalist" troops in Soviet media reports were, indeed, a piece of laughably unbelievable political theater.

I was in full anti-Soviet timber that night, lambasting the moribund superpower's geriatric leadership, seemingly determined to bankrupt the country in its efforts to spread Soviet-style socialism to lands near and far, which the Kremlin swore would ensure "world peace." A regime that had seemed invincible and frightening in the 50's and 60's now looked worn out, a victim of its own messianic militarism, its economy in shambles, hated and resented by the very people the Kremlin swore it was duty-bound to drag into the 20th century. How could anybody believe Soviet expansionist propaganda? Yet many did.

At some point in my diatribe, Michael smiled at me and said, "Are you so sure that *you* cannot be manipulated as well?" There was, after all, the Gulf of Tonkin and the disastrous Vietnam War.

Wayne Allensworth is the author of The Russian Question *(Rowman & Littlefield). He resides in Keller, Texas.*

I remember seeing a neon ad for an American brand of cigarettes glowing on the wall, one fantasy among many sold to Americans and foreigners alike. I felt like the wind had just been knocked out of me.

The years went by, and American Marines died in Beirut, veterans with "Gulf War syndrome" were unceremoniously cast aside by the government, and voters elected a bottom-feeder known as "Slick Willy" as our Commander in Chief, an odd nomenclature for an elected official in what was supposed to be a republic. Nominal conservatives no longer seemed to distrust state power and favored foreign adventurism as much as liberals did. The old America was slipping into the twilight. Nobody—least of all the self-styled "conservatives"—seemed to notice.

With war looming last March, I thought of Michael, Belgrade, and the question he had asked me as I listened to a news report on the car radio concerning Iraq.

We had heard a great deal about Iraqi propaganda, but I wondered how much we ourselves were being manipulated. Osama bin Laden was being mixed up with Saddam Hussein in media reporting concerning the "War on Terror," and I had read that many Americans seemed to believe that Iraq was behind the destruction of the World Trade Center, though there was no evidence suggesting any such thing. But the simple juxtaposition of Bin Laden with Saddam by the Washington spin doctors, together with the short attention span of a public raised on sound bites and bombarded by advertising, had done the trick.

I found the magic phrases of the White House speechwriters strikingly similar to the hackneyed formulations of the International Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: This war would be about "freedom," "democracy," and "world peace"; the chosen enemies of the moment were

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"terrorists" (the Afghan resistance fighters were "bandits" in Soviet parlance) who embodied "evil." The phrase "Axis of Evil" was a nice touch, invoking memories of grainy prints of "Late Show" World War II movies for many, as well as letting us know just how bad these bad guys were. It was a slick, effective sales job, nicely packaged, the lowest common denominator in the service of the basest instincts: no appeal to reasoned patriotism, no call to arms in defense of the homeland, no determined demand for justice. Its appeal was to wounded pride, fear, and the need for self-assertion and affirmation. Somebody would pay; who that somebody would be did not seem to matter. Anyway, a democracy could not be wrong, could it? He who is not with us is against us. (The President had said as much.) How the country I loved so deeply could have justified the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki no longer seemed a mystery to me.

It also occurred to me that the solidarity generated by a war, manifested in the "We'll Never Forget 9/11" bumper stickers and the flags adorning many cars, the popularity of aggressive war songs on country-music stations, and the "Support Our Troops" sloganeering and ubiquitous yellow ribbons, was a comforting substitute for lost community in a mass society. Maybe that is partly why so many mainstream conservatives seemed to like war or were, at least, not inclined to question any military action taken by the U.S. government: We had been good then, in the days of the "Good War." Maybe they believed that war could bring back the country of their nostalgia, the country whose disappearance they also pretended not to notice. If only Robert Nisbet were alive to see this!

Thoughts like these were running through my mind that day in March, but I was tired of all the war talk, so I turned the radio off to enjoy the ride in silence.

The sun was setting on a beautiful day in North Texas. I had noticed that the redbuds were already blooming and that the first bluebonnets had appeared amid the grass, which lined the road in bright green patches. The orange-red sun occasionally popped through stands of post oaks, then disappeared again, glowing at the top of the trees, a hidden star gradually taking its place in the nighttime firmament.

I watched the landscape around me change in the dimming light, a surreal kaleidoscope of conflicting worlds melting into one another: The whitewashed houses and windmills gradually mixed in with the blinding lights and blazing ads of the strip malls. The cattle, horses, and pastures slowly disappeared with the creeping growth of the housing developments, themselves pocket Disneylands, "Valleys," "Vistas," "Ranches," "Creeks," and "Meadows" where none could be found—not now, anyway. It seemed as though Andy Warhol had somehow invaded one of Frederic Remington's canvases, wilder than the Plains Indians chasing after the artist's dashing cowboys, planting disorienting, flashing signs in the dust like bizarre high-plains hallucinations. How long would Texas remain herself? How much time did we have? I tried not to think about it.

I arrived at my destination just as the President appeared on TV, telling us what we already knew. War was imminent. I sat and listened like everyone else, but I could not look at him. Then somebody turned the TV off, and the pastor said a prayer. And he prayed in the name of Our Lord that our soldiers be protected and that a merciful God watch over the people of a long-suffering land half a world away.

Then we went about our business, which was organizing the church's building-fund program. Nobody asked me what I thought of the war, and I was glad they did not; lots of my friends had, however, and I never really answered them adequately. I will try to do so now.

My whole life seems to have played out against a backdrop of wars, police actions, interventions, and "humanitarian" bombings, none of them sanctioned by a Declaration of War, all of them in places that seemed as distant as the dark side of the moon, carried out for reasons nobody could quite explain. "American leadership," they called it. It was all in "our national interest," they said, since "we" had to "show American resolve," though the threats the pundits, politicians, and think-tank strategists described seemed exaggerated; the countries, obscure; and the rationales for intervention, fuzzy: If "we" didn't invade Grenada, send Marines to Lebanon, intervene in Haiti, "nation-build" in Somalia, bomb Yugoslavia, or throw Iraq out of Kuwait, then . . . what? What did it all mean for my family?

When would it all end? Never, apparently: The only "superpower" was on a roll and could not stop, making millions of enemies around the world along the way, something I became painfully aware of as I traveled abroad in later years. I felt duty-bound to defend my country from her critics, but less and less able—or willing—to justify the actions of the U.S. government.

In the meantime, conservatives had long since stopped trying to conserve anything, and liberals, the supposed defenders of the downtrodden, had become blind to the distress of America's working people, even as their jobs were steadily being "outsourced." Both conservatives and liberals seemed to think that, the more distant a tragedy, the more American intervention is warranted. Both dreamed of a borderless post-America where mosques outnumber churches, where everything from soup to hay is produced somewhere else, where "progress" either blocks rural people from making a living or demands that we destroy our hometowns in order to save them. (They call it "economic development.") To my mind, the most dangerous enemy seemed to be the enemy within: What kind of "homeland" could there be for such people?

Anyone who spoke against "progress" was denounced as an anti-American wacko, a reactionary primitive, or a crypto-Nazi. "Do you want to go back to the Spanish Inquisition or the days of using outhouses?" the usual suspects asked. They claimed all those wars had something to do with "our freedom" and "serving our country," though the arguments seemed rather strained, to say the least.

So I should not have been surprised at the negative reactions of many people to suggestions that "Homeland Defense" should begin with sealing America's porous borders, reforming U.S. immigration laws, deporting illegal aliens, and reassessing Washington's interventionist foreign policy. Such opinions are widely viewed as un-American, "isolationist," or "racist" even by people who do not write editorials for the *Washington Post*. I am all in favor of killing or capturing Bin Laden, of course, but the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws seems a more humane means of self-defense than launching an endless War on Terror that will involve killing thousands of people in countries (Syria and Iran are already being mentioned as the next targets) that had nothing at all to do with September 11. After all, the terrorist attacks simply could not have taken place if Bin Laden's minions had not been here. I was first bewildered, then depressed, by many of my acquaintances, some of whom

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did not flinch at the thought of using nuclear weapons (those are "Weapons of Mass Destruction," folks, hardly "precision" or "smart" weapons) but who cried "Racist!" at any suggestion that maybe there are lots of immigrants who just do not belong in America. Killing foreigners in their homelands is apparently fine, as victims of "collateral damage" or otherwise, but the notion of sending aliens back to their own countries is deemed scandalous.

So here it is: another war, the War on Terror, of which Afghanistan and Iraq might just be the opening rounds. For all those who asked, this is what I think: "Preemptive war" is immoral and crazy. If Washington attacked everybody who could even theoretically be a threat to the United States, we would be at war forever. The Iraq war will likely create more terrorists, leaving our country less—not more—secure. If you think killing people for access to oil or to juice up "the economy" can be justified, you are a moral cretin.

I know how some of you will react. As of this writing, American troops are still in the field, fighting and dying, though the banner aboard the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln* reads "Mission Accomplished." Many of you have friends, neighbors, brothers, even—God help us—sisters, wives, and mothers in the line of fire. (So do I.) Once blood is shed, ordinary people—to save themselves from madness and despair—have to believe it was not shed in vain, that the cause was just, or that the victory justified the sacrifice. So dissenters are regarded with suspicion and hostility. And the barbaric behavior of many antiwar protestors only reinforces this view.

For the record, the antiwar patriots I know of never wished our troops anything but success once military operations commenced, if "success" meant seizing Baghdad and toppling Saddam's regime as quickly as possible. Some of our friends did call for a halt to the war and the swift return of the soldiers to our homeland. That was their way of "supporting the troops" that no one wanted to see die—or kill—in an unjust, unprovoked, and illegal war that was all the more difficult to accept as it was done in our name. Nobody that I know of wants to see the U.S. Armed Forces bogged down in an Iraqi quagmire, though most seem to think the United States should get the troops out of there as soon as order is restored, a prospect that seems more distant with each passing day. We criticize the War on Terror and the behavior of many of our countrymen precisely because we love America enough to feel anguish for what has become of her. It is a suffering love that chastises its own. Nevertheless, dissenters will be seen by many Americans as disloyal.

Our identity has been distorted by decades of "progress," state expansion, and warfare: America is lumbering into the 21st century certain, as many Soviets were certain, that spreading "democracy" through messianic militarism will bring about universal prosperity and "world peace," with many of us finding a sense of purpose and artificial community in constant mobilization. Like the Soviets, Americans are now hated and resented by the people our leaders have pledged to force into the postmodern world. Our most determined foes no longer fear us. Our postindustrial economy is faltering, and the costs of "power projection" are draining our treasury. How can anybody take the propaganda of our ruling elites seriously? Many good people do, however.

I can only ask, dear readers, that you listen, look around you, and see what is happening to our beloved homeland. The real war is here. C

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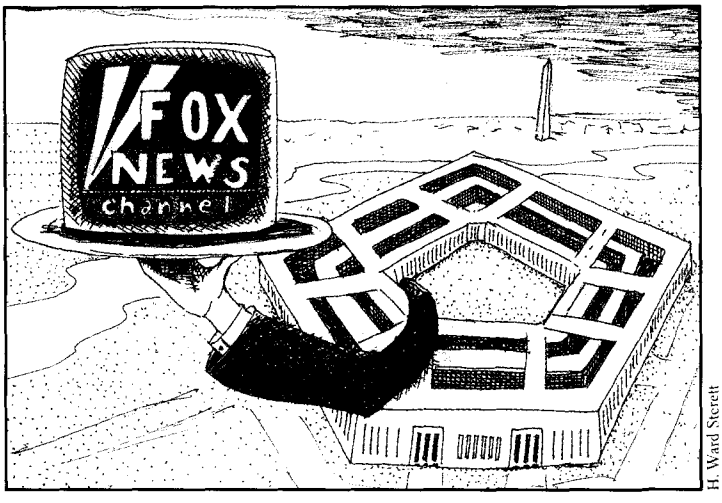
The Media

The Forgotten Casualty of the Iraq War?

by Steven Greenhut



H. Ward Sterett

What, no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? This development has resulted in the sort of newsroom hand-wringing that one usually finds only when a reporter for the nation's most prestigious newspaper is caught fabricating quotations in scores of news stories.

Where is the liberal media when we need it? There is no question that the journalism profession is populated, top to bottom, with people who share a liberal vision of the world. This is a source of constant frustration to conservatives and libertarians, since news editors and reporters always see the good in government agencies and refuse to give serious attention to information that, say, casts aspersions on the one constitutional right left in this nation—the right to an abortion.

Presumably, modern liberals should not like wars, especially ones waged by Republican presidents. Yet, in the nation's newspapers, there was very little skepticism toward the Bush administration's bogus claims about the threat Saddam Hussein posed to the world.

Editor & Publisher, an industry publication for journalists, featured an opinion piece on its website on June 12, asking whether the press was asleep at the wheel before the war started with regard to WMD's. As columnist Joe Strupp wrote:

> Although newspapers before the war did report the disagreement between administration officials and U.N. weapons inspectors, few major papers took the issue on full-throttle with demands for answers—or dissected the sketchiness of the administration's evidence of vast stockpiles of WMDs.

What explains the lack of zeal for covering serious stories about this war—beyond, perhaps, the media's typical willingness to trust official government sources for their information? The media does not have a leftist bias, in the sense that it is filled with crusading far-left reporters of the sort who write for the *Nation*. Sometimes, that would be better than what we now have, since the lefties were among the few writers gunning for the war.

Mostly, reporters and editorial writers have an establishment-liberal bias. They see the world in much the same way that a standard-issue Democratic member of Congress or president might see the world. Their only real opposition comes from the establishment right, as seen in the chest-pounding pro-war propaganda from the alternatives to the liberal media. That does not leave much of a choice for those of us whose views fall outside that narrow band of center-left to center-right. Who are you going to believe: Dan Rather or Bill Kristol?

Granted, some newspapers have provided good coverage of the downside of the war, at least in its aftermath. Mainstream newspapers, especially such prestige papers as the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*, have reported on the increasing strength of Islamic fundamentalist movements, attacks on Christian shop owners in Iraq by Muslims, and many other negative side effects of the war.

I am pleased to see such coverage, however late; I am still bothered by the climate that surrounded journalism in the early part of the war, however. For a while, it seemed as if there would be long-term negative consequences for the freedom and openness of the press, as advocates of war, egged on by the neoconservative media (Fox News, *National Review*, the *Weekly Standard*), tried to paint all opponents of the war as sympathizers of dictatorship or nutty leftists.

That fear has passed, but it is worth thinking back to the early days of the war. There was a broad sense throughout the country that opposition to the war bordered on treason. Media

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Steven Greenhut is a senior editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register *in Santa Ana, California.*

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liberals had mixed feelings but were unwilling to ask the tough questions. Remember how the Democratic presidential candidates acted? They did not really support the war, yet they refused to voice anything more than the most tepid objections.

The neoconservatives, however, were on the offensive. As a longtime hater of the dominant TV networks, I have applauded the emergence of Fox News as a reasonable alternative. While a great deal of its programming is lightweight, I appreciated a lineup that included a steady stream of nonliberal voices. Yet I came to loathe Fox during the war, as it morphed into a propaganda arm of the Pentagon.

Fox led the "Shut up, you traitor" chest-pounding that influenced the lack of broader coverage of the war. In a column I wrote for the *Orange County Register* on March 30, entitled "Confessions of a Bad American," I raised questions about the apparent lack of weapons of mass destruction and about the administration's exaggerated case for an offensive war against a distant country.

> In an effort to be all things to all men, journalism has lost its way. It has lost the hard edge for hard news, especially now that most newspapers are owned by a handful of national chains that have little interest in controversy or serious analysis.

My main target was Bill O'Reilly, the Fox News talking head who was leading the pro-war cheering section:

> Criticism of the war, while bombs are flying and coalition troops are under fire, makes me a "bad" American, according to a certain blow-hard commentator whose idea of tough journalism is badgering guests with comments such as, "Come on, Mr. So and So, you don't really believe blah, blah, blah."
>
> Although he apologized for labeling as "anti-American" anti-war protesters who demonstrate during the war, Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly argued on March 3 that "I will call those who publicly criticize our country in a time of military crisis, which this is, bad Americans . . . [I]t is our duty as loyal Americans to shut up once the fighting begins, unless—unless facts prove the operation wrong, as was the case in Vietnam."

O'Reilly's words typified what was going on at the time: an effort to get those who opposed the war, on the right or the left, to shut up and back the President rather than engage in honest debate.

As an editorialist, I am not exposed to the pressures that occur in the newsrooms. My newspaper, the *Orange County Register*, maintains a strict wall of separation between the editorial page and the rest of the newspaper. The company's libertarian editorial philosophy is in stark contrast to the liberalism typical in our newsroom, as in most other newsrooms in the country.

We had free rein for our antiwar views. So I wrote what I wrote about the war and got nothing but support from my bosses. I cannot complain. Nonetheless, I was subject to pressures unlike any I have felt before.

Our editorial-page readers are a conservative bunch, and they occasionally get annoyed with the libertarian leanings of some of our positions. To much of the public, issues are liberal or conservative, period. *Chronicles* readers probably share the same frustration, since paleoconservatives, like libertarians and paleolibertarians, tend to break the mold.

Understandably, these regular readers were mad at us. They did not like our attacks on the President and genuinely believed that criticism of a war while it is going on is borderline unpatriotic. Still, most of our regular readers are surprisingly polite and honorable in their disagreements. I received heated calls and e-mails, but that is part of the fun of being in the editorial-writing business. It was not much different from what I had experienced on other particularly contentious issues.

Then one day, while traveling out of state, I called to check my voice mail, and it was full of bitter, angry, nasty, ignorant messages of the "Why don't you move to Iraq, you commie" sort. These were angry people. When I got back to the office, my e-mail was filled with the same sort of vitriol. People were calling my editor, and there was an obvious attempt to clamp down on the *Register*'s editorial voice.

What had happened?

On his nationally syndicated radio program, Bill O'Reilly had read passages from my column—at least that is what many people told me—and then had proceeded to call me either a moron or an idiot several times. He was more reserved on his TV program, but O'Reilly criticized me there also.

I cannot complain. I criticized him, and it was amusing for a basically unknown writer to be targeted by a nationally known celebrity. Really, how could I lose? But there certainly was a sense of anger and hostility—and an attempt at intimidation—from his followers that I have never felt before. It reminded me of what H.L. Mencken once wrote about how beating the drums for war caused even the opponents of war to doubt themselves.

I followed up with a column entitled "War brings out the purple people," in which I documented this crude attempt to stifle war debate. I quoted from Mencken as well as from the great Old Right journalist John T. Flynn, who coined the phrase "purple people" in his book *As We Go Marching*. Nonetheless, I was subsequently called a leftist and a liberal and a commie. I am not used to being called those names.

Nationally, similar attempts by the neocon right to silence opposition became more common. The best-known effort was by David Frum, who tried to boot a host of Old Right luminaries out of the conservative movement. In a *National Review* cover article entitled "Unpatriotic Conservatives," Frum launched a tirade accusing many honorable men (including the editor of this magazine) of being antisemites because of their antiwar stance.

That was in March, during the thick of the pro-war hysteria. Soon after, things calmed down. Frum's charges were so reckless and so silly that few paid him any serious attention. Moreover, *National Review* no longer has the ability to kick

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anyone out of the conservative movement. The young editors who run it simply do not have sufficient gravitas to frighten anyone. O'Reilly was able to incite some callers to my newspaper, but I have not heard any angry responses to our continued opposition to the war—at least nothing comparable to the tone of earlier days. Their latest efforts to limit debate have simply failed.

When the BBC broke the story that the rescue of Jessica Lynch was largely Pentagon propaganda, the neocon squad sprang into action once again. Robert Scheer, the *Los Angeles Times* columnist whose leftism usually turns my stomach, did a fabulous job in covering the story.

"Eight days after her capture, American media trumpeted the military's story that Lynch was saved by Special Forces that stormed the hospital and, in the face of heavy hostile fire, managed to scoop her up and helicopter her out," Scheer wrote on May 20.

> However, according to the BBC, which interviewed the hospital's staff, the truth appears to be that not only had Iraqi forces abandoned the area before the rescue effort but that the hospital's staff had informed the U.S. of this and made arrangements two days before the raid to turn Lynch over to the Americans.

Writing about the heated response on May 30, Scheer argued:

> It is one thing when the talk-show bullies who shamelessly smeared the last president, even as he attacked the training camps of Al Qaeda, now term it anti-American or even treasonous to dare criticize the Bush administration. When our Pentagon, however—a $400-billion-a-year juggernaut—savages individual journalists for questioning its version of events, it is worth noting.

Forget about the ridiculous defense of President Clinton: Scheer had a point. As his column detailed, the neoconservative media and the Pentagon's official flaks bloviated, but they never bothered rebutting the BBC story, or Scheer's version of it, with the "facts."

The good news is that the efforts at shutting down debate did not succeed for long. Even though U.S. troops might be in more danger now than they were during many phases of the war, the public seems to understand that widespread debate is healthy. The heightened sense of nationalism has subsided, and the widespread warmongering is failing.

Scheer continues to flail away at the war. The *Register* does not even get much comment on it anymore. O'Reilly has proved himself able to stir up a few malcontents to call a newspaper, but he has not accomplished much more than that. The media is as free and healthy as it has ever been, though that really is not saying much.

The major problem the media face today is a lack of diversity of views, even as editors embrace racial and ethnic diversity at ludicrous levels. There is little zeal in newsrooms for hard-hitting coverage, while much space is given to happy "community" stories that do not ruffle feathers.

I heard little complaint from journalists about the concept of embedding, which essentially made journalists mouthpieces for military units. Here is the introduction to a special news section printed in one newspaper:

> They surged across the desert in their massive war machines, in a blizzard of smoke and sand, American Marines rolling northward toward war. . . . They were heavily armed as they rode across the desert, laden with M-16s and grenade launchers and tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition. . . . But the weapons were wielded by men, only human, and as hard and fit as they were after months and years of training, their bodies were vulnerable to pain. They could suffer—and in the coming weeks, they would.

Such prose might be pleasing to some, but it is not balanced coverage of the war. Efforts to support the local troops—which flow naturally from an emphasis on "community journalism"—often melded with the liberal emphasis on trusting the government. As a result, the public was spared a debate about the war until after it had ended. Even now, the toughest questions are going unasked.

In an effort to be all things to all men, journalism has lost its way. It is run by people who generally share the same view of the world. It has lost the hard edge for hard news, especially now that most newspapers are owned by a handful of national chains that have little interest in controversy or serious analysis.

Fortunately, the internet is helping to fill the void. Many links on different websites originate in traditional newspaper sources. Yet websites increasingly feature original pieces and are able to link to newspapers from all over the world, where the *Zeitgeist* is a bit different.

One day, perhaps, newspaper journalists will set aside the pointless hand-wringing and recognize that the public deserves (even if they may not want) a wide-ranging debate filled with controversy and diverse opinions on most issues—including foreign wars. If they do not get it delivered to their houses for 50 cents per day, they will find it for next to nothing on the internet.

On Getting Things Done

by Richard Moore

The problem has been solved, properly nursed.
You only had to give up on it first.
Your self distracted you, and hope, and need.
At last depair trashed them, and you were freed.

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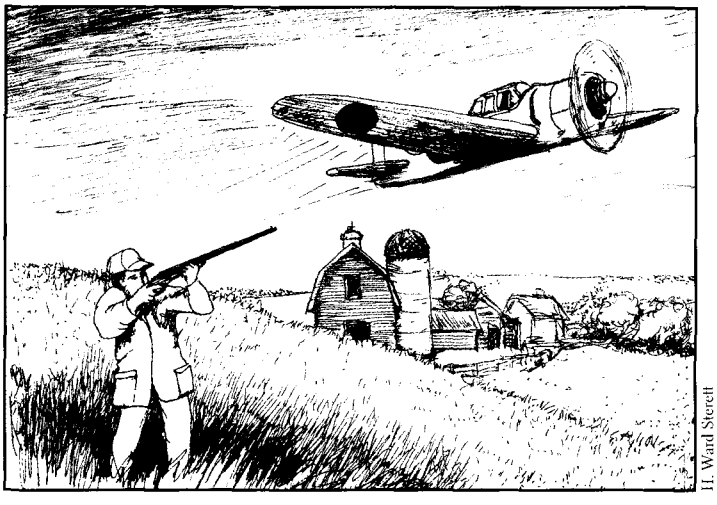
Republic or Empire?

Beware of Sneak Attacks

by Roger D. McGrath



H. Ward Sterett

"Remember Pearl Harbor" was a phrase familiar to everyone I knew growing up. In a sneak attack, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor! This was a dastardly, despicable act. A sneak attack! The politically correct today like to say "surprise attack," but that is something done in time of war. The Japanese attacked without a declaration of war. Dirty, craven, unforgivable. The Japanese thought their sneak attack was clever, daring, bold. They were going to knock us out of the war before it began. We were a threat to their dreams of conquest on the Asian mainland and in the Pacific. What better than a preemptive strike? It was not without precedent. The Japanese had launched a sneak attack against the Russian Pacific fleet at Port Arthur on the Liaotung Peninsula in Manchuria in 1904. The similarities between Port Arthur and Pearl Harbor are eerily striking.

Although President Franklin D. Roosevelt may have had different ideas, the American people wanted nothing to do with the war in Europe or in China until Pearl Harbor. Gallup started taking their first polls in the late 1930's, and consistently—right up until December 7, 1941—70 percent or more of the American people wanted no American involvement in Europe or the Orient. From 1935 through 1939, Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts, signed by the President, that, among other things, forbade the sale or transport of arms or munitions to a belligerent, private loans to a belligerent, and the entry of American ships into war zones. However, when Germany attacked Poland, President Roosevelt saw an opportunity to compromise American neutrality. On September 21, 1939, while the Germans were consolidating their gains in the western half of Poland and the Russians were attacking Poland from the east, Roosevelt addressed a special joint session of Congress, asking that the Neutrality Acts be amended to allow Britain and France to obtain war materiel on a "cash and carry" basis.

Not without a fight and considerable public comment, a bill worked its way through Congress and, on November 4, was passed to become the Neutrality Act of 1939. An even more intense fight developed over the Lend-Lease bill, introduced in Congress in January 1941. The bill would give the President the power to send foreign aid to our allies in the form of materiel and food. For two months, the debate raged. The passage of the bill, argued Sen. Burton K. Wheeler, a Democrat from Montana, "will plow under every fourth American boy." Testifying before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, Charles Lindbergh said, "I oppose aid to England that would weaken us or carry us into the war. I don't believe the United States can or should police the world." The bill finally won approval in Congress during March, but House Republicans voted 135-24 against it.

Meanwhile, between the passage of the Neutrality Act of 1939 and the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, Congress approved the Burke-Wadsworth Act, the first peacetime conscription law in U.S. history. Introduced in the Senate in June 1940, the first draft of the bill required registration for all men 18 to 65 and essentially left length of service for those conscripted to be determined by the government. The sweep of the bill sparked widespread opposition. Senator Wheeler declared the bill the product "of a few people who want to see us go to war and send our youth to Asia and Europe." Newspapers, magazines, and columnists joined the debate. H.L. Mencken editorialized against the bill; Walter Lippmann, who had applied for an exemption from the draft in World War I, was a vociferous proponent.

Week by week, the bill was reduced in scope until registration was required only for those ages 21 to 35; service was lim-

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Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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ited to one year; and draftees could serve only in the Western Hemisphere or in U.S. possessions and territories elsewhere. Even then, strong opposition remained in both the House and Senate, especially among Republicans. Sen. Hiram Johnson, a Republican from California and former governor of the state, declared the bill "a menace to our liberties." In September, after more than two months of debate, the bill was finally approved by the House, 233-124, and the Senate, 47-25.

Men began being drafted, for 12-month terms of service, in October 1940. During summer 1941, the Roosevelt administration had Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall appear before Congress and argue that the draftees' length of service should be extended. Conscripted soldiers were none too pleased. On the walls of barracks in dozens of Army camps appeared the chalked acronym OHIO: Over the Hill in October. In August, a draft-extension bill passed the Senate by a slim majority and squeaked through the House by one vote. President Roosevelt quickly signed it into law.

Desertions may have become a problem, but the Japanese sneak attack took care of that. Suddenly, men by the thousands were volunteering. On December 8, Congress declared war on Japan—not on Germany. The Krauts had not attacked us—the Japs had. Three days later, as required by the Tripartite Pact with Japan and Italy, Germany declared war on the United States. We then declared war on Germany. The sequence of events is not without significance. We did not go to war to save Europe or to prevent a pogrom of Jews or anybody else. We went to war because Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. Only a small minority of Americans would have favored going to war for any other reason.

The sneak attack unified the nation and Congress as nothing else could have. Unlike the battles that raged over the Neutrality Act of 1939 and the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, the passage of a declaration of war against Japan was accomplished as soon as Congress convened on Monday morning, with only one dissenting vote. Jeanette Rankin, a Republican representative from Montana, declared, "As a woman I can't go to war, and I refuse to send anyone else." The Missoula-born Rankin was the first woman elected to Congress, winning a seat in the House in 1916. In 1917, she joined 55 other members of Congress in voting against a declaration of war, remarking, "Small use it will be to save democracy for the race, if we cannot save the race for democracy." She did not return to Congress until 1941, just in time for her second negative vote on a declaration of war.

For several reasons, beginning with Pearl Harbor, the war in the Pacific has always fascinated me far more than the war in Europe. Although I was not born until more than a year after the war ended, my older brother was eight when the sneak attack occurred. He was helping our sister learn to walk at the time. My mother, father, and brother told me stories—and I asked that they repeat them again and again—about the moment they learned of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Unless somebody was alive at the time and old enough to appreciate the event, or knows someone who was, it is difficult for anyone today to understand the fury and rage that swept through America after the initial shock wore off. On the Pacific Coast, fear of a Japanese invasion was widespread. For many Californians, during the early months of 1942, it was not *if* but *when* and *where*. In Pacific Palisades, where my family lived, men and boys, carrying deer rifles and shotguns, patrolled the bluffs, night and day, and scanned the beaches and the sea for Japanese submarines and landing craft. Other men patrolled the streets at night, checking for light leaking from blackout curtains.

For America, the war started in the Pacific and ended there. When I was an undergrad at UCLA, several professors used their lectures to lament the very thing that ended the war, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. How different these views were from those of the American veterans of the war in the Pacific whom I came to know while growing up in the 50's. To a man, they said, "The Japs started it. We finished it." They were all ecstatic that the bombs quickly ended the war and aborted the planned invasion of Japan. This was especially true of Marine veterans of hellish island campaigns who experienced *bushido*—the Japanese warrior code of death before surrender—firsthand and of those sailors offshore at Okinawa who watched *kamikaze* pilots hurl themselves at American ships.

This was the America that I learned about—a country of reluctant warriors who were roused to fury because of a sucker punch. We were not militaristic by nature or imperialistic. However, when provoked, we fought like hounds from hell. We fought because we were attacked, and, because of that, our vengeance was righteous. During the last weeks of the war, Adm. William F. "Bull" Halsey was scavenging every bit of fuel and ammunition in the fleet for his carrier planes. When asked what he was doing, he replied, "I want to hit the Japs one more time—*before they quit*." The Bull was a hero.

Most of us kids in the 50's were superpatriots. We did not know it; we just were. We stood when the flag came by and put our hands over our hearts. We studied the Revolution and the Founding Fathers and drew the colonial battle flags. For us boys, the Gadsden flag, inspired by the first unit of Marines to serve, was our favorite. Featuring a coiled rattlesnake with the motto "Don't Tread On Me," it said it all for us. We saw every war movie two or three times when it was shown at our local theater and watched *Victory at Sea* over and over again on television. We proudly recited the Pledge of Allegiance and did not flinch when "under God" was inserted. This was probably because everybody went to church on Sunday. The only difference was which one.

With such a background, it came as a shock to me when I learned that President Eisenhower had lied to us. It was during the spring of 1960. I was in the eighth grade at Paul Revere Junior High School. Appropriately, our nickname was "Patriots." Although we had done the quick-as-you-can under-the-desk missile-attack drill since grammar school, I spent little time contemplating the Cold War. I was busy drawing waves on my notebook cover and counting the days until summer. Like the Sirens calling Odysseus, the point at Malibu was beckoning all us gremmies.

On May 1, the Russians claimed they had shot down an American spy plane. President Eisenhower said that it was a weather plane, collecting forecasting data, which had strayed into Soviet airspace. "Yeah, the dirty lying Commies!" thought I. Then the Russians threw the trump card on the table. They had the pilot, alive and well, and the wreckage of the plane. The pilot was USAF Capt. Francis Gary Powers, on loan to the CIA. He was flying the Kelly Johnson-designed Lockheed U-2 spy plane at 80,000 feet over the Soviet Union when a newly developed Russian missile reached his aircraft. Powers was able to parachute to safety, but he had been unable to activate a self-destruct device on the plane. Nonetheless, we were not ready to fess up. A U-2 was rigged with weather-monitoring

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equipment and a fictitious NASA registration and markings and put on display at Edwards Air Force Base for the press. The Soviets countered by displaying enough equipment from Powers' U-2 to end any doubt about its mission. Ike was forced to admit that we had a spy program of overflights and that Powers was monitoring and photographing Soviet installations.

I was stunned. My country was lying, and the Soviets were telling the truth. Ultimately, though, I became convinced that our prevarications and fabrications were necessary in the interest of national defense—necessary to protect American lives. Thanks to all the German scientists they had captured, the Soviets had a missile program second to none. All those under-the-desk drills were not about nothing.

The lie that put more than 50,000 American boys—or their body parts—in zippered plastic bags occurred four years later. During 1964, the United States began intensifying a program, a product of the CIA, know as 34-Alpha: the insertion of commando agents into North Vietnam to gather intelligence and to destroy various installations. At the same time, the U.S. Navy conducted "DeSoto" patrols in the waters off North Vietnam, both to support 34-Alpha operations and to gather electronic intelligence. On August 2, 1964, after 34-Alpha commandos had struck North Vietnamese installations at Hon Me and Hon Ngu, North Vietnamese patrol boats attacked a U.S. destroyer, U.S.S. *Maddox*. We were told that North Vietnam had launched an "unprovoked attack" against *Maddox*, which was on a "routine patrol" in the Gulf of Tonkin.

On the night of August 4, 1964, *Maddox* and another U.S. destroyer, U.S.S. *Turner Joy*, reported a second attack. This was some 17 hours after 34-Alpha commando raids at Cap Vinh Son and Cua Ron. *Maddox* reported radar contact with three or four vessels approaching at high speed. Curiously, *Turner Joy* made no radar contact. In support of the destroyers, the carrier *Ticonderoga* launched several planes. Visibility was poor, with intermittent clouds and thunderstorms. Although *Maddox* was now reporting that she was under torpedo attack, the pilots saw no enemy vessels and no wakes from torpedoes. One of the pilots was Comdr. James Stockdale, who was destined to be shot down in 1965 and spend eight horrific years as a POW and later be decorated with the Medal of Honor. "I had the best seat in the house to watch that event," said Stockdale of that night in the Tonkin Gulf, "and our destroyers were just shooting at phantom targets—there were no PT boats there. . . . There was nothing there but black water and American fire power."

Capt. John J. Herrick, a veteran of World War II and Korea and the skipper of *Maddox*, reported almost immediately after the incident that there probably had been no attack. The black night, stormy seas, unusual meteorological effects, and inexperienced and nervous crewmen, especially the sonar and radar operators, were responsible for a perceived attack. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara asked for clarification, and Herrick reported that he could not verify that an attack had occurred. Nonetheless, McNamara would tell Congress that there was "unequivocal proof" of a second "unprovoked attack" on U.S. ships, and Congress would obligingly pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Meanwhile, President Lyndon Johnson, putting on his most serious and somber expression, went on national television and, while dozens of aircraft were launched from the decks of *Ticonderoga* and *Constellation*, explained to the nation that our ships had suffered an unprovoked attack and that he had ordered air strikes against North Vietnam. A little more than a year later, I joined the Marines.

Much later, we—the public—learned that there had been no attack. I am now beginning to fear that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction—at least nothing that could threaten our national security. Did not President Bush tell us that the Iraqi dictator had a nuclear program that was less than a year away from producing weapons? Did not the President and Secretary of State Colin Powell tell us that Iraq had massive stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons? Were not the WMD's the *casus belli*? It is difficult not to conclude that the Bush administration, heavily influenced by the neoconservatives (an oxymoron if there ever was one), is out to implement a grand geopolitical strategy to remake the Middle East. That is something that Alexander the Great did. Something the Romans did. Something Muhammad did. Something Britain did. Something empires do, not republics.

And who is to do it? Certainly not the neoconservatives. Do you think any of them could produce his DD214 for you? They use such terms as "moral clarity" and the need to project our power—but it is to be done with someone else's body. A conversation I had with a budding neocon during a class discussion reveals their version of moral clarity. He did not seem to understand—and he is not alone in this today—that we entered World War II only because Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Upon learning the exact circumstances of our entry into the war, he proceeded to argue that we should have gone to war irrespective of Pearl Harbor, to save the Jews in Europe. I then asked him if we should go to war whenever a particular group of people is being persecuted or killed. He replied, emphatically, "Yes." Well, then, asked I, should we have gone to war against Turkey in 1915 to save the Armenians—a million of whom were killed—or against the Soviet Union in 1933 to save the Ukrainians (several million or more of whom were liquidated)? He seemed stumped.

I then asked exactly who was included when he said "we." He looked at me as if I were a bit dense and said, "We—the United States." I continued, "Does that mean you?" "No," he replied. "The guys in the Army." I then inquired if our boys should be put in harm's way for interests that have nothing to do with the defense of the United States. If it is doing the "right thing," he replied. "Are you willing to do what you call the right thing with your own body?" I asked. "Those guys are volunteers—they chose to do it. I'm just finishing my degree and have a good job lined up." He is not a soldier and does not plan on becoming one—that is a job for someone else. In a republic, it is the job of the citizens; in an empire, it is the job of imperial forces.

Smedley Butler, who rose from lieutenant to major general in the Marine Corps and was twice decorated with the Medal of Honor, making him one of only two Marines in history to be so honored, concluded after 33 years in the Corps that

> War is just a racket. . . . I believe in adequate defense at the coastline and nothing else. If a nation comes over here to fight, then we'll fight. . . . I wouldn't go to war again as I have done to protect some lousy investment of the bankers. There are only two things we should fight for. One is the defense of our homes and the other is the Bill of Rights. War for any other reason is simply a racket.

Semper fi, General Butler. C

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What Would Jefferson Do?

A Brief History of Dissent

by Stephen B. Presser

H. Ward Sterett

Are the Dixie Chicks traitors? Lead singer Natalie Maines boldly announced at a concert in London, just before the beginning of our recent armed incursion into Iraq, "Just so you know, we're ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas." The firestorm that ensued involved coordinated radio boycotts of the Chicks' music and Dixie Chicks CD-bashing events. Many of their fellow country artists disowned them, and, in a stunningly bizarre bid to win back their fans, the winsome Chicks posed nude, like three refugees from Paul Chabas's *September Morn*, for the cover of *Entertainment Weekly*. They had provocative words, such as "free speech," "Dixie sluts," "Saddam's Angels," and—most importantly—"traitors," scribbled all over their possibly airbrushed and improbably nubile bodies.

On March 17, 2003, the day President Bush issued his 48-hour ultimatum to Saddam, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, with possibly feigned solemnity, told a meeting of union leaders: "I am saddened, saddened that this president failed so miserably at diplomacy that we're now forced to war. Saddened that we have to give up one life because this president couldn't create the kind of diplomatic effort that was so critical for our country." As reported by the Gannett News Service, a trio of Republican voices quickly rose to condemn Daschle. Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert said, "Those comments may not undermine the president as he leads us into war, and they may not give aid and comfort to our adversaries—but they come mighty close." Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist labeled Daschle's statements "irresponsible and counterproductive to the pursuit of freedom." Finally, Tom DeLay, the second-ranking Republican in the House, blasted Daschle for "second-guessing our commander in chief on the eve of war." Daschle responded that "To announce that there must be no criticism of the president, or that we are to stand by the president right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but morally treasonable to the American public."

Similar criticism greeted other critics of the war in Iraq. For example, one contributor to the *South Bend Tribune*'s "Voice of the People" feature wrote in April that "these so-called 'war protesters' have *no* right to hide behind the First Amendment in expressing their sophistry," and others labeled the protesters "so-called Americans" and "traitors," who, as *Tribune* staff writer Andrew S. Hughes put it, "don't measure up to their definition of what a 'patriot' is."

Who is right about what amounts to "treason" and what a "patriot" should do? What is the obligation of a patriotic American when he believes that our government is increasingly engaged in actions that he cannot condone? Is there such a thing as honorable dissent that is a healthy part of patriotism?

Thomas Jefferson has recently been widely quoted, most notably by ACLU President Nadine Strossen, as maintaining that "Dissent is the highest form of patriotism." However, distinguished University of Illinois historian Richard Jensen has noted on an historians' listserve that it is unlikely that Jefferson made any such statement. While Strossen's purported Jefferson quote, according to Professor Jensen, is probably "a recent hoax," the real Jefferson, he observed, actually believed that dissent was dangerous. As Jefferson the president put it, excoriating those who objected to his ill-conceived embargo, "Where the law of majority ceases to be acknowledged, there government ends, the law of the strongest takes its place, and life and property are his who can take them." In a similar vein, he observed that, "While the principles of our Constitution give just latitude to inquiry, every citizen faithful to it will . . . deem embodied expressions of discontent, and open outrages

Stephen B. Presser is the Raoul Berger Professor of Legal History at Northwestern University School of Law and the legal-affairs editor for Chronicles.

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of law and patriotism, as dishonorable as they are injurious." In 1797, Vice President Jefferson wrote that "Political dissension is doubtless a less[er] evil than the lethargy of despotism, but still it is a great evil, and it would be as worthy the efforts of the patriot as of the philosopher, to exclude its influence, if possible, from social life." Strossen, then, gets Jefferson exactly backward.

Jefferson was often out of the mainstream of American politics and tradition, however, and thus we need to inquire further to determine what constitutes treason and what patriots ought to do. Consider the loosely leveled allegations that current critics of the administration are "traitors." A traitor, strictly speaking, is one who commits treason, and treason is narrowly defined by the Constitution as "levying war against the United States," or giving "Aid or Comfort" to her enemies. The Constitution also makes clear that treason consists of "overt acts," and mere speech hardly qualifies—unless, for example, you use speech to pass on military secrets to nations or people hostile to us.

> It is wrong to label those who merely exercise their First Amendment rights as "traitors" or, perhaps, even to suggest that they are less patriotic than their fellows, Jefferson notwithstanding.

Treason is a capital crime, and, thus, it is no surprise that the law circumscribes it narrowly. When defenders of the Bush administration level this charge against their critics, though, undoubtedly they, following Jefferson, are simply trying to silence dissent, which raises the broader historical question: What *have* been the permissible limits of dissent according to the American tradition? To understand these permissible limits and the possible positive duties of dissent in America, we must, as the Framers insisted we should continually do, examine the "first principles" of our polity.

However, a distinct difficulty in engaging in such an examination is revealed each time we seek the "original understanding" of the Framers, whether it involves law, politics, or philosophy. Since the Framers were astute politicians, and since politics has always been the art of the possible, the framing of the U.S. Constitution was a series of compromises, leaving the resolution of many problems for future times and shrouding in uncertainty the exact nature of the compromises made. Thus, while the Framers generally agreed that state legislatures needed to be prevented from interfering with pre-existing contracts; that only the new federal government should be allowed to coin money, issue currency, and, in general, regulate interstate commerce; and while they were agreed that national defense and diplomacy needed to be centralized in the federal government, with most matters of law left to the states, the exact demarcation of federal and state powers and jurisdiction was left murky.

Perhaps the most striking area of disagreement, which became evident once the new federal government began to operate under the Constitution in 1789, was the purpose of the union itself. The group that began to coalesce around Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton (and which had been instrumental in advocating a strong role for the federal government in promoting interstate commerce) believed that America's destiny was to be a great commercial power, one that would form strong alliances with other countries, particularly Great Britain. The Hamiltonians, believing that some kind of commercial aristocracy was inevitable, hoped to ally the interests of a rising commercial class with the betterment of all, and, in particular, to meld its interests with those of a strong central government. The group that began to form around then-Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson was much more fearful about forging ties, commercial or otherwise, with European nations. While Jeffersonian Republicans favored encouraging the popular revolution in France, they feared luxury as a corrupting influence and were determined that the mistakes in policy and government that had so long riven Europe would not be repeated here. In its purest form, their ideology advocated turning away from Europe, constraining as much as possible the power of the federal government to intrude on the lives of citizens, and dispersing land and wealth, so that individual citizens could better control their own destinies—much, if not all, of which was anathema to the Hamiltonian Federalists. Both groups, however, could find much within the original constitutional and political schemes to support their views, and a fair historian cannot conclude that either exclusively captured the original understanding.

Indeed, the tension between these two conflicting views, inherent in our laws, Constitution, and tradition, has provided much of the dynamic over the course of American history. As a people, we have been unwilling to let either view be completely dominant for long, and we have uneasily sought to preserve both. Hence the schizophrenic character of American politics and life, which still baffles foreigners. At some level, we seem to have understood that such a balancing act is necessary, and a right to dissent forms an essential foundation for maintaining such a balance. Thus the elevation of First Amendment freedoms of speech and press to supreme prominence in American life.

As Jefferson's remarks indicate, however, this was not always the case. In the late 18th century, it was a belief common among our leaders that, as Supreme Court Associate Justice Samuel Chase once put it, there were only two ways to ruin a republic: the introduction of luxury or the licentiousness of the press. Indeed, some conservatives might justifiably still believe that the First Amendment is often the first refuge of scoundrels, and its invocation in cases involving child pornography, flag desecration, and compulsory public funding of the arts certainly contributes to that temptation. Still, it is also a part of American lore that we embrace the dictum usually wrongly ascribed to Voltaire that "I may disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend, to the death, your right to say it."

Our beliefs about a right to dissent were formed in the 18th century, as part of a struggle in England and in the colonies over the legal doctrine known as *seditious libel*. According to English common law (the body of practices not codified in statutes but administered in the English courts), no private citizen had the right to criticize the government. Any criticism of the government was thought to carry within it the

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seeds of sedition and, thus, was prohibited. The theory was that the king had been divinely appointed; to criticize the king's government was indirectly to criticize God. In a nation with a state church and a monarchy and an aristocracy whose legitimacy was grounded in religious belief, dissent could not be tolerated.

More to the point, even those who did not seek to immunize the king from criticism on religious grounds believed that maintaining the delicate membrane of civil order required that criticism of the government be silenced, since the people, who rarely understood the complexities of affairs of state, were so easily misled by demagogues and malcontents. Thus the hoary doctrine of English common law that "The greater the truth, the greater the libel" held sway for centuries. True criticism of the government was deemed even more dangerous to civil order than false, because the truth was more likely to be believed, and disorder, sedition, or rebellion was likely to result.

This began to change in the century that followed the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. In the famous case of John Peter Zenger in the 1730's, some Americans (borrowing from radical English theorists) had begun to argue boldly that it was the obligation of colonists to criticize royal governors when they failed to accord citizens the established rights of Englishmen, chiefly those having to do with the protection of private property and person. Slowly, the common-law rules of seditious libel—and, in particular, the notion that "the greater the truth, the greater the libel"—began to change. By the end of the 18th century, in both England and America, the rule had been altered—first in practice, then by statute—to allow truth as a defense to a prosecution for seditious libel.

The truth of a statement was what lawyers call an affirmative defense, however, and that meant that anyone charged with seditious libel had the burden of proving their criticism of those in power was true, which was often a difficult task, particularly where matters of opinion were involved. This problem eventually led Thomas Jefferson and James Madison to argue that the doctrine of seditious libel, at least in the federal courts, was inconsistent with the freedoms of speech and press guaranteed by the First Amendment. Madison's and Jefferson's views, while out of the mainstream when they were first invoked, eventually became American orthodoxy, to the extent that no scholar would now seriously maintain that any criticism of the government—true or false—ought to result in criminal punishment.

While it may not have been the intention of the Framers, by the late 19th century, Americans seem to have adopted the free-speech theories of John Stuart Mill, expressed in his book *On Liberty* and endorsed by no less an authority than Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. In a famous 1919 case, Holmes wrote that "the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market." The notions that there ought to be a "marketplace of ideas," that truth ought to combat falsity in such a market, and that the truth might grow flabby if it is not constantly made to engage in combat with falsehood remain dominant in First Amendment law. With the exception of those (usually on the left) who try to impose speech codes at universities and others who seek to limit political debate by restricting the expenditure of funds to express a point of view (on the left and the right), our chattering class generally continues to endorse the notion that the remedy for speech or acts you deem inappropriate is more speech (though not necessarily more acts).

First Amendment theory, as administered by the courts, now even refuses to allow actions for damages to reputation of any public figures (politicians, actors, anchormen, and all others generally regarded as newsworthy) unless the person maliciously causing the damage (by speech or press) knows that what he is saying or publishing is false. The fact that any celebrity seeking such damages is now required to prove "malice" or "willful disregard for the truth" means that private libel actions for public figures are almost impossible to win. For some time, then, legally speaking, it has been open season on all public figures.

> What have been the permissible limits of dissent according to the American tradition? To understand these permissible limits and the possible positive duties of dissent in America, we must, as the Framers insisted we should continually do, examine the "first principles" of our polity.

According to our tradition, then, it is wrong to label those who merely exercise their First Amendment rights as "traitors" or, perhaps, even to suggest that they are less patriotic than their fellows, Jefferson notwithstanding. This does not mean, of course, that other patriotic Americans cannot disagree with critics of the Bush administration (or any administration) or should not, when appropriate, subject them to ridicule. The *South Bend Tribune*'s May 4 issue quoted Woodrow Wilson's suggestion that "[T]he greatest freedom of speech was the greatest safety, because if a man is a fool the best thing to do is to encourage him to advertise the fact by speaking" and noted that, as Vice President Hubert Humphrey once put it, "The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously."

For the last two centuries, some Americans have, like Jefferson, occasionally sought to circumscribe permissible parameters of political debate. In the 1830's, Alexis de Tocqueville noted that "In America the majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them." Tocqueville somehow failed to note the similar old saw that "You can always tell a Harvard man, but you can't tell him *much*." The current Commander in Chief, a Harvard Business School graduate, running against the stereotype, has wisely not personally impugned the patriotism of any of his critics. Those around him should follow his example.

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The Terror Enigma

Israel and the September 11 Connection

by Justin Raimondo

"Remember 9/11!" is the rallying cry of the War Party; what we are remembering, however, is a half-truth. It is time to draw the curtain on the largely ignored prehistory of September 11. Although Bush-administration officials deny that they had even a hint of what was to come, government agencies were literally awash with warnings from the intelligence services of other nations—including the British, the French, the Germans, the Russians, the Argentines, the Israelis, the Egyptians, the Moroccans, and the Jordanians.

The Israelis had warned us in August 2001, when they sent a delegation to Washington, handed over a list of 19 individuals in the United States whom they believed to be planning terrorist activities, and issued a nonspecific warning that a major terrorist attack was afoot. Yet there are indications that the Mossad knew about Muhammad Atta and his gang long before they let U.S. law enforcement in on the secret.

In the months before September 11, the Mossad had launched a major covert operation in the United States, involving hundreds of agents who not only kept a close watch on the terrorists but may have effectively blinded U.S. antiterrorism investigators to the activities of Al Qaeda in the United States. The evidence can be found in the U.S. government's own documents, leaked by its own employees, and in its public pronouncements before the decision was made to quash this story at any cost.

In March 2001, the National Counterintelligence Center—whose mandate empowers it to identify and assess possible threats to U.S. national security—posted the following warning on its website (*www.ncix.gov/news/2001/mar01.html*):

> In the past six weeks, employees in federal office buildings located throughout the United States have reported suspicious activities connected with individuals representing themselves as foreign students selling or delivering artwork. Employees have observed both males and females attempting to bypass facility security and enter federal buildings. If challenged, the individuals state that they are delivering artwork from a studio in Miami, Florida, called Universal Art, Inc, or that they are art students and are looking for opinions regarding their work. These individuals have been described as aggressive. They attempt to engage employees in conversation rather than giving a sales pitch.

The NCIC warned that "these individuals have also gone to the private residences of senior federal officials under the guise of selling art." How they discovered the home addresses of these senior officials, the NCIC did not say. At that point, two of the "students" had been arrested for immigration violations: The suspects possessed counterfeit immigration papers and identification. Later, many more would be picked up—nearly 200—and summarily deported to their country of origin: Israel.

The NCIC alert was the earliest premonition, some six months before the event, of September 11. It was the first known instance—and possibly the last—in which the "antiterrorism" apparatus set up by the U.S. government actually worked, to some extent. The NCIC ended its warning with what turned out to be an accurate assessment of the threat:

> Other reporting indicates that there may be two groups involved, and they refer to themselves as "Israeli art students." One group has an apparently legitimate money-making goal while the second, perhaps a non-Israeli group, may have ties to a Middle Eastern Islamic fundamentalist group. Federal employees observing any activity similar to that described above should report their observations to appropriate security officials.

And report they did. Indeed, so many accounts of Israeli "art student" sightings poured in, from such a wide variety of federal agencies, that they were compiled in a secret government dossier. Their mode of operation was always the same: They would enter a U.S. federal facility, even some that were unmarked, and make their pitch, aggressively seeking entry through back doors and generally acting as if they were casing the joint. Since the nation's frontline fighters in the "War on Drugs" had, for some reason, attracted the particular attention of these "art students," this document, which only came to light after September 11, seems to have been compiled and written up by the internal security unit of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), in cooperation with the Immigration and Naturalization Service, sometime in summer 2001. (See "Suspicious Activities Involving Israeli Art Students," *cryptome.org/deail-spy.htm*)

The incidents had occurred "since at least the beginning of 2000" and increased in November: After April 2001, "the number of reported incidents . . . declined[;] however, the geographic spread of the incidents" was extended "to Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and Los Angeles." In addition to visiting DEA offices, these "art students" also descended on a number of other law-enforcement and Department of Defense facilities across the continental United States. The majority of recorded incidents, however, seem to have occurred in the southern half of the country, with the epicenter of activity located in southern Florida. Investigators associated with the DEA's Office of Security Programs apparently became convinced that, as the report put it:

Justin Raimondo is the director of Antiwar.com *and the author, most recently, of* An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard.

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> The nature of the individuals' conduct, combined with intelligence information and historical information regarding past incidents involving Israeli Organized Crime, leads us to believe the incidents may well be an organized intelligence gathering activity.

These were no ordinary Israeli "tourists," as they claimed when confronted. While all Israelis must serve some time in the military, an unusually high proportion of these "students" were deployed in elite units. The DEA report lists name, rank, and serial number: Itay Simon, Marina Glickman, and Dilka Borenstein are all described as former members of Israeli military intelligence. Zeev Miller is identified as a "combat engineer," and Ofir Navron is a "bomb disposal expert." Aran Ofek, the son of a two-star Israeli general, was apprehended in Dallas. Taken together, their credentials are impressive: "intelligence officer," "electronic intercept operator," "special forces," "demolition/explosive ordnance expert."

A group of Israelis was picked up by the FBI after being spotted in Liberty State Park in Jersey City, New Jersey, laughing and high-fiving one another as the World Trade Center burned on the other side of the river. A story by Paulo Lima in the Bergen, New Jersey, *Record* (September 12, 2002) describes how five men—"Israeli tourists"—were picked up eight hours after the WTC attack, "carrying maps linking them to the blasts":

> [S]ources close to the investigation said they found other evidence linking the men to the bombing plot. "There are maps of the city in the car with certain places highlighted," the source said. "It looked like they're hooked in with this. It looked like they knew what was going to happen when they were at Liberty State Park."

Lima reports that the five "tourists" had been picked up after local police received the following alert from the FBI:

> Vehicle possibly related to New York terrorist attack. White, 2000 Chevrolet van with New Jersey registration with "Urban Moving Systems" sign on back seen at Liberty State Park, Jersey City, NJ, at the time of first impact of jetliner into World Trade Center. Three individuals with van were seen celebrating after initial impact and subsequent explosion. FBI Newark Field Office requests that, if the van is located, hold for prints and detain individuals.

These reports attracted little if any notice. Not long after, however, the whole operation began to surface in major media. On November 23, 2001, the *Washington Post* ran a story by John Mintz detailing how, along with the 1,000 or so Muslim Middle Easterners jailed in the Ashcroft sweep, 60 Israelis had been picked up and held, not just for routine visa violations, but in connection with the September 11 investigation. The *Post*'s subhead read: "Government calls Several Cases 'of Special Interest,' Meaning Related to Post-Attacks Investigation."

According to Mintz's account, INS officials in Cleveland and St. Louis testified in court that these Israelis were "of special interest to the government"—putting them in the same category as hundreds of mostly Arab men rounded up by the feds since the attacks.

Over the next eight or nine months, the rest of the story would come out, though it would be obscured by denials and submerged by an oddly indifferent media. "It is rather strange," remarked *Jane's Defense Intelligence Digest* (March 13, 2002), "that the US media seems to be ignoring what may well be the most explosive story since the 11 September attacks—the alleged break-up of a major Israeli espionage operation in the USA." (The *Post*'s story blandly assured readers that the Israeli detainees were "observing a time-honored tradition in their country—touring the world after their mandatory service in the Israeli military," although Mintz did note that "a number of them had served in counterterrorist units in Israel.")

On December 11, 2001, Fox News ran the first in a series of investigative reports that blew the whistle on a vast Israeli spy network operating on American soil—and openly posed the question of whether the Israelis had foreknowledge of September 11. According to *Jane's*,

> What is striking about Fox News reporter Carl Cameron's portrait of Israel's spy network in the U.S. is the sheer vastness of his subject. The broad scope of the operation, with its many fronts and activities conducted from coast to coast, had all the aspects of a major military campaign. In the months leading up to 9/11, Cameron claimed, Israel was waging a covert war against its principal ally and benefactor, the United States.

Over four nights, Cameron reported the myriad details of Israel's far-flung underground army in the United States. He noted that some of the 60 detainees arrested in the wake of September 11 were active Israeli military officers. Some had failed polygraph tests when they were asked about "surveillance activities against and in the United States."

Cameron showed how the Mossad had thoroughly penetrated top-secret communications systems. He cited veteran law-enforcement agents afraid for their jobs if they questioned Israel's role. What really caught the attention of viewers, however, was the following statement from his first broadcast:

> *There is no indication that the Israelis were involved in the 9-11 attacks*, but investigators suspect that the Israelis may have gathered intelligence about the attacks in advance, and not shared it. *A highly placed investigator said there are—quote—"tie-ins." But when asked for details, he flatly refused to describe them, saying—quote—"evidence linking these Israelis to 9-11 is classified. I cannot tell you about evidence that has been gathered. It's classified information."*

Cameron's bombshell should have provoked a frenzy of media interest and calls for an official investigation. That no such call was ever made is a story in itself.

In the first part of his report, Cameron focuses on a single aspect of a multilayered Israeli intelligence operation that became increasingly visible in the months preceding September 11:

> Numerous classified documents obtained by Fox News indicate that even prior to September 11, as many as 140 other Israelis had been detained or arrested in a secretive and sprawling investigation into suspected espionage by Israelis in the United States. Investigators from numerous government agencies are part of a

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working group that's been compiling evidence since the mid-90s. These documents detail hundreds of incidents in cities and towns across the country that investigators say—quote—"may well be an organized intelligence gathering activity."

These documents included a 60-page report compiled by a number of federal agencies. In the gray, matter-of-fact bureaucratese so typical of a government document, the "Israeli Art Student Papers"—leaked some months later—confirmed Cameron's contention that a nationwide underground apparatus of Israeli agents, centered in Florida and Texas, carried out extensive operations in the months leading up to September 11. Their targets included the DEA; the INS; the Federal Protective Service; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; a host of state and federal courthouses and other buildings; and military bases.

The leaked document describes in excruciating detail the doggedly persistent efforts of Israelis claiming to be "art students" to get into the offices and even the homes of federal law-enforcement agents and government officials.

A March 5, 2002, article in *Le Monde* by Sylvain Cypel was more specific: "More than a third of these 'students' claimed residence in Florida," and "at least five were intercepted in Hollywood [Florida], and two in Fort Lauderdale." Cypel points out the proximity of the two cities and reminds us that "at least 10 of the 19 terrorists of 9/11 were residing in Florida." Hollywood, a town of some 25,000 souls, north of Miami, was a major nexus of Israel's spy network *and* the Muslim terrorist cell responsible for September 11:

> Four of the five members of the group that diverted American Airlines flight number 11—Mohammed Atta, Abdulaziz Al-Omari, Walid and Waïl Al-Shehri, as well as one of the five terrorists of United flight 175, Marwan Al-Shehhi—resided all at various times in . . . Hollywood, Florida. As for Ahmed Fayez, Ahmed and Hamza Al-Ghamdi and Mohand Al-Shehri, who took over United flight 75, like Saïd Al-Ghamdi, Ahmed Al-Haznawi and Ahmed Al-Nami, of United flight 93 which crashed September 11 in Pennsylvania, and Nawaq Al-Hamzi, of AA flight 77 (crashed into the Pentagon), they all at one time resided at Delray Beach, in the north of Fort Lauderdale.

The most logical assumption is that the Israelis were engaged in a large-scale intelligence-gathering operation on Islamic terrorist cells in the United States.

Another important piece of the puzzle is found in an October 14, 2002, article by Oliver Schröm in the German weekly *Die Zeit*. Schröm writes:

> Not until after the attacks of September 11 did the consequences of the spy ring become clear. Apparently the agents were not interested in military or industrial facilities, but were shadowing a number of suspects, who were later involved in the terrorist attacks against the U.S. According to a report of the French intelligence agency that *Die Zeit* examined, "according to the FBI, Arab terrorists and suspected terror cells lived in Phoenix, Arizona, as well as in Miami and Hollywood, Florida from December 2000 to April 2001 in direct proximity to the Israeli spy cells."

The Mossad was particularly interested in Muhammad Atta, the terrorist leader, and Marwan al-Shehi, who lived in Hollywood, Florida. *Die Zeit* reports that the Mossad was watching the terrorist leader and his chief accomplices *very* closely:

> Everything indicates that the terrorists were constantly observed by the Israelis. The chief Israeli agent was staying right near the post office where the terrorists had a mailbox. The Mossad also had its sights on Atta's accomplice Khalid al-Midhar, with whom the CIA was also familiar, but allowed to run free.

The title of the *Die Zeit* piece—"Next Door to Mohammed Atta"—may be a bit of an overstatement, however. As Schröm writes:

> [Muhammad Atta and Marwan al-Shehi] lived in Hamburg before they settled in Hollywood, Florida[,] in order to plan the attacks. A Mossad team was also operating in the same town. The leader, Hanan Serfati, had rented several dwellings. "One of Serfati's apartments was located on the corner of 701st St. and 21st Ave. [*sic*] in Hollywood, right near the apartment of Atta and al-Shehi," French intelligence reported later.

There is just one problem: There is no 701st Street and 21st Avenue in Hollywood, Florida. Serfati's rental was at 701 South 21st Street, about a half-mile from Atta's 1818 Jackson Street address. Serfati rented several apartments in the area, however, and one could easily have been "next door to Mohammed Atta" and his confederates, who moved around quite a bit. In addition, the geographical congruity of the Israeli "art students" and the hijacking conspirators was not limited to South Florida, as John Sugg has pointed out in a March 20, 2002, piece for the *Weekly Planet* (*atlanta.creativeloafing.com/2002-03-20/fishwrapper.html*):

> Many of the apparent operatives had set up shop at addresses only stones' throws from Arabs in San Diego, Little Rock, Irving, Texas, and in South Florida. The Planet also has obtained a watch list of mostly Arabs under scrutiny by the U.S. government. The addresses of many correspond to the specific areas where the Israelis established bases.

While the Israelis were closely observing Atta and his friends, they did not inform the U.S. government what they were up to until August 2001: *Der Spiegel* reported (October 1, 2002) that they handed over a list of 19 terrorist suspects, with at least four of the hijackers on it, "a few weeks before" September 11, but the federal government says that the warning was for attacks "outside the United States."

The warning was nonspecific, indicating only that these were *potential* terrorists. And there are other discrepancies that cloud the picture of Israeli cooperation in this matter. If the Israelis had decided in August to come clean with the information they had, why were federal agents still arresting and detaining our "partners" in the "War on Terrorism" in late November and early December?

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What the Thunder Said

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

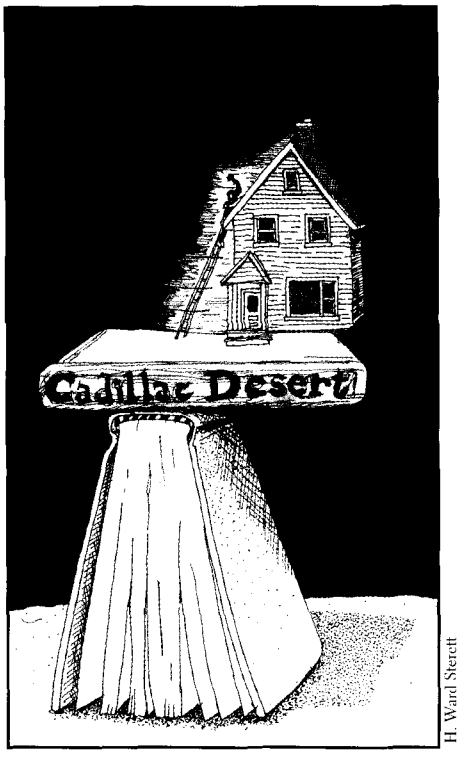
"The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up,
and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods."
—Numbers 16:32

A Dangerous Place:
California's Unsettling Fate
by Marc Reisner
New York: Pantheon Books;
192 pp., $22.00

◆

The Lisbon Earthquake of 1755 convinced Voltaire (who didn't need convincing to begin with) of the nonexistence of God. The Great California Earthquake, when it comes (as it must), will only demonstrate the nonexistence of what California has in place of God. Whether it actually manages to convince anyone is another story.

The late Marc Reisner, who died three years ago at the age of 52, wrote what is arguably the best and most important single work on the American West ever published. *Cadillac Desert* (1987), viewed one-dimensionally, is a history of the development of water policy and water delivery (water "growth") in the arid Western states, from the Hundredth Meridian to the Pacific Ocean. I am ashamed to say that, when the book first crossed my desk, I gently hefted its formidable bulk and set it aside respectfully as being a volume of no interest to the readers of an East Coast magazine of conservative politics, however worthily it might serve as a doorstop, until, in crippling old age, I found time to read the thing as an act of public duty by an adoptive Westerner. In fact, I got around to the job somewhat sooner than that, after several years of hearing friends refer to the book in piety and at length, like Calvinists citing Scripture. And I discovered them to have been wasted years, like the decades I spent ignoring the music of J.S. Bach. *Cadillac Desert* is best described as an aqueous version of *Centennial* by a writer who knew how to write, combining a novelist's imagination and technique with those of an historian; did his own research; took his time as an artisan in preference to shipping out one prefab monstrosity after another; and had a mind instead of a card-catalogue file above his eyes: James Michener with an intellect, and the literary conscience of a true artist.



H. Ward Sterett

As *Cadillac Desert* was, *A Dangerous Place* is being described by many reviewers as a work of environmental prophecy. The book is that, certainly; it is *not*, however, an activist work, Marc Reisner having possessed an unflinchingly realistic mind, not a vulgar one. Unlike most environmentalist productions, Reisner's work never sought to oppose the People of Light to the People of Darkness, Enlightenment to Greed, Innocent Nature to Depraved Humanity: Though there are villains in his stories, they are human beings, not ideological dolls, treated always with a degree of ironic detachment. Reisner's California is comparable to Pliny's Herculaneum and Pompeii, as described by Albert Jay Nock:

> The witless agitation of the people—Julia with her necklace, the man with his hoard of gold, the baker leaving his bread in the oven—bore orderly witness to impending disaster due to the fact that the towns should not have been built where they were. So, as viewed by the light of reason, the behavior of Western society in the last two decades is a simple matter of *prius dementat*, orderly, regular, and to be expected. It presages calamity close at hand, due to the fact that society's structure is built on a foundation of unsound principles.

In Marc Reisner's formulation:

> Half of San Francisco burned to the ground in 1906. What did we do? We rebuilt and told ourselves it wouldn't happen again for a long time. Nearly all of Yokohama and a third of Tokyo . . . burned to the ground after the earthquake in 1923. What did Japan do? It put Tokyo right back where it was and made it the most populous city in the world. Another Great Kanto earthquake . . . could become the world's first trillion-dollar natural disaster. Will the Japanese rebuild Tokyo exactly where it is, after that happens? Of course—I just can't imagine how, and with whose money. Just as we will rebuild here. Will Los Angeles relocate,

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is senior editor for books for Chronicles.

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now that it's lost half its water [following Reisner's imagined Big Quake]? Where?

A Dangerous Place is a posthumously published fragment of an unfinished work. (In the book's final section, the narrative tenses have not even been made to agree.) For the first 58 pages, the author is back on the subject of water development in Northern and Southern California—with some overlap from *Cadillac Desert*, though the material remains fresh. For the last 120, he is off on another subject, newer to him and touched on only where necessary in the earlier work: earthquake. "Among civilizations that have overextended themselves, California, rather than settle its human hordes where water is and earthquake zones aren't, has done the opposite."

Carey McWilliams, the late author and native Californian who worked for years as editor of the *Nation*, wrote in *California: The Great Exception* that "There was never a region so unlikely to become a vast metropolitan area as Southern California. It is . . . manmade, a gigantic improvisation." By contrast, the development of the greater metropolis of Northern California, known as the Bay Area, was, according to Reisner, "as foreordained as Los Angeles's was contrived"—despite the fact that, owing to the steepness of the hills surrounding a narrow shoreline, Yerba Buena (the future San Francisco) had nowhere to put all the people who moved there and fresh water only at a considerable distance. What both places shared was the misfortune to be objects of greater-than-serious attraction to a migratory mass of mass men mass-produced by the modern industrial age: rootless by situation, predatory by nature, gullible in mind, and hysterical in temperament. No more than half of California, if so much as that, was ever a paradise. The human locusts arriving in their hordes treated desert waste and fruited Eden alike, fantasizing about the first and exploiting the second as they swarmed destructively over both. The "settlement" of California, north and south, is history's preeminent example of what inevitably results when postcivilization ambushes pristine nature with the suddenness of a tsunami rolling in upon an unprotected shoreline.

Southern California, centered on Los Angeles, was the deliberate, wildly fraudulent creation of Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler of the *Los Angeles Times*, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and the Santa Fe Railroad, working together in what Reisner calls a vast Ponzi scheme to lure an enormous population to the region in the interests of increasing newspaper circulation and realty values and selling Pullman tickets. (Finally, there was Washington, D.C.: "Like almost everything else, aerospace would eventually feed off the federal government—the dynamo behind the city's post-Depression growth.") Their scheme worked—far beyond their expectations, perhaps, if not their imaginations. The Bay Area, for its part, was the creation of the first transcontinental railroad, two world wars, the education and scientific-research industries, and the cybernetics revolution. Unlike the development of Southern California,

> All of this happened, and is happening, effortlessly. The Bay Area never conspired to grow; it never advertised itself around the world; it had no real need for a chamber of commerce, *Facts and Figures*, exhibits at international exhibitions . . . or silkworm booms. It just grew. Unlike Los Angeles, it needn't have worried a jot about attracting people or industry. Its real problem was where to put them.

What the two regions *did* and *do* have in common was a water problem; a seismic problem; and the fact of "the fatal upshot of this state's century and a half of frantic growth: most of its inhabitants have settled, and will continue to settle, where they shouldn't have."

All of these problems were susceptible of solution; and the California immigrants, being, at least as a whole, an ingenious people, discovered them. The trouble is, the solutions they found were temporary in effect and, therefore, in the circumstances, hazardous, and certain to become more so in time, as the state's population swelled and its infrastructure increased. You didn't have to be Jack Northrup or Donald Douglas to recognize the fact; and so it is that California ingenuity has been counterbalanced by a stupidity nearly criminal in its deliberateness, to a degree that goes beyond simply confirming the frailty of human nature and the deep inviolability of prideful humanity to the point of showcasing them. To refuse to bear the moral weight of clarity is necessarily culpable. Seldom in history has the discrepancy between technology and wisdom, or technique and morality, been as glaring as it is in the story of California over the last 150 years of its history: perhaps the reason why the rest of the country—in fact, the world—has always tempered its envy of the California way of life with an awed, half-unconscious contempt.

Southern California's answer to its water problem was to steal what it needed from the farming community in the Owens Valley on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada and transport it 300 miles by aqueduct *through* the mountains; then to acquire, by deceitful means, more than California's allotted share of Colorado River water, at the expense of neighboring states, and pump it *over* a different mountain range and across the desert to the coastal cities. The Bay Area solved its water difficulties by building aqueducts, too, while engineering a system of levees in the Delta region, east of San Francisco and its outlying hills where the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers converge in what was originally a wilderness of swamps (part of the Great Central Valley), to create a vast system of sub-sea-level islands where crops irrigated by snow melt from the Sierra Nevada could be raised. (Both Northern and Southern California rely heavily on the Delta as a water source to supply 20 million-plus people.) The Greater Los Angeles region tackled its earthquake problem by ignoring it; the Bay Area faced its own by *aggravating* the danger—using earth excavated from the steep hillsides as landfill, deposited around the margins of San Francisco Bay on which the city developed further, "laying gargantuan infrastructure atop a migratory landscape." This fill, in addition to being semisaturated and unstable in the most stable of conditions, is liable to sudden liquefaction in the event of the violent shaking accompanying a major earthquake. According to William Lettis of William Lettis & Associates in San Francisco, "The Bay Area has the highest density of faults per square kilometer of any urban area in the world."

"For months," Reisner writes,

> I had been wondering which big earthquake, among those considered likeliest to occur, could extract the greatest revenge for all the liberties we Californians have taken with the natural order of the state. If the Hayward fault [running beneath San Francisco] were to produce a quake that wrecks the Delta,

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the Bay Area would be paralyzed, southern California water-starved [in addition to a great deal else]. . . . What I am about to conjure is not what scientists call the "hypothetical worst case." My earthquake is a 7.2, high up in the expected Richter-scale range of intensity; most seismologists say a 7.0 is likely, a 7.2 merely possible. It strikes in 2005, which is at the early side of recurrence predictions. Planned re-engineering projects of supreme importance—especially a new eastern section of the Bay Bridge—are not likely to be finished by then.

I am writing now on October 20, 1999. . . . What follows is pessimism that could be worse.

To repeat: Marc Reisner was not an ideologue. For him, as a prophet of California's destruction (as of the ruination of the West's ecology by Western water managers and developers), consequences—rather than causes and the burden of responsibility for them—were finally what mattered. In the last 77 pages of his book, Reisner anticipates those consequences, graphically and with narrative power. His scenario is not entirely grim (hundreds, if not thousands, of Berkeley students are crushed to death when the University of California's antiquated buildings collapse on them), but it is certain to get your attention nonetheless.

And afterward? San Francisco will rebuild itself, Reisner insists.

> But billions and billions of dollars will . . . come from American taxpayers living elsewhere, and I can already sense what the rest of the country is thinking: *Where does it end?* The peninsula segment of the San Andreas fault could produce an earthquake with consequences similar to this. Is it going to wait another century, or is it going to go in . . . 2008? The last Hayward fault earthquake was in 1868. The San Andreas peninsula segment slipped in 1865. Both quakes were nearly as powerful as what we just experienced [imaginatively].

Some environmentalists might have wished to live to see the destruction of California, but Marc Reisner was probably not among them; and so—despite the loss to Western letters his death entails—I'm pleased he didn't. ◁c

Christ and History

by Scott P. Richert

At the End of an Age
by John Lukacs
New Haven: Yale University Press;
230 pp., $22.95

◆

In theory, it seems like a good idea. The corpus of historian John Lukacs's work is so rich and has grown so large that those who have just discovered it may be uncertain where to start. His *magnum opus*, *Historical Consciousness*, alone has gone through three editions, all of which are worth reading as separate works. Combine that with the regrettable condition that some of his more accessible works—*Outgrowing Democracy* and *The Passing of the Modern Age*, for instance—are out of print (and used copies are very hard to find), and the need for a compact introduction to Lukacs's thought seems obvious. Unfortunately, for all of its virtues, *At the End of an Age* is not that book.

Lukacs would be the first to admit—or, rather, insist—that theory and reality do not always mesh. Ideas develop in an historical context, but they are also shaped by the actions of men as much as (indeed, perhaps more so than) they shape those actions. As Lukacs is fond of saying, writing of the half-truths of historian E.H. Carr's analysis, "the important question is 'What is Carr driving at?' and not 'What is the make of this Carr?'" But that is precisely why, in order to understand an historian's work, it is essential to have some knowledge of the historian. Lukacs is correct when he writes that

> The recognition that different persons see the past (and also the present) differently, and that thus every historian is different, does not mean that because he is the product of his past he cannot do otherwise.

To claim *that* would be to deny free will. But to understand the choices that an historian makes—and, more importantly, his purposes (not his motives, which are deterministic) in making them—we cannot view his work as something separate from—abstracted from—his life.

A case in point: *The Passing of the Modern Age*, a thin, prophetic volume that is still among my favorite of Lukacs's works, is, as Lukacs describes it in *Confessions of an Original Sinner*, "a summation of the devolution of institutions and standards at the end of our age." I read it first in 1990, before reading *Confessions*, and it profoundly influenced the choices I made as I began my graduate studies that year. Still, I approached *The Passing of the Modern Age* somewhat differently when I reread it a year or two later, having read *Confessions* in the meantime. Knowing that *The Passing of the Modern Age* was published on November 15, 1970, the day that Lukacs's first wife died, and recognizing the extent to which her passing was bound up in his thought with "the devolution of institutions and standards at the end of our age," helps reveal additional nuances and complexities in the work and, of course, in the underlying thoughts that the text expresses. Similarly, knowing that the structure of the volume is shaped by a hierarchy of historical factors, "applicable, by and large, to the history of modern nations," that Lukacs had sketched out in *Historical Consciousness*, and being familiar with that hierarchy from reading the latter work, is bound to influence the reader's appreciation of *The Passing of the Modern Age*. None of that distracts from the reader's free will or his ability to apply (and develop, and distort) Lukacs's ideas as he sees fit. However, just as our appreciation of a novel changes as we grow older (and, indeed, the novel's meaning for us changes as well), so, too, our understanding of an historian's work changes as, broadly, we change and, particularly, as our understanding of the historian's purposes change.

Which brings us back to *At the End of an Age*. This really is two books, roughly divided into the first two chapters ("At the End of an Age" and "The Presence of Historical Thinking") and the last two chapters ("An Illustration" and "At the Center of the Universe"), with the middle chapter ("The Question of Scientific Knowledge") acting as a bridge. In the first "book," Lukacs provides a sketch of the evolution of his own thought and presents a condensation of themes developed in *Historical Consciousness* and elsewhere. The reader familiar with Lukacs's work is likely to find these chapters somewhat repetitive. Lukacs revisits many examples from previous works (such as the remarks about E.H. Carr quoted above), often even employing very similar phras-

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ing. All of that would be understandable (and longtime readers could skip ahead) if these chapters provided a quick introduction for those unfamiliar with Lukacs's thought. For that purpose, however, these chapters are somewhat too distilled. The new reader is likely to be left (incorrectly) with a sense of superficiality. At best, he may be hungry for a more detailed treatment, but then he is quickly thrust into the second "book," which (it seems to me) can be read most profitably only after having digested *Historical Consciousness*, because the illustration provided in Chapter Four, and the final philosophical ruminations about man's position at the center of the universe in Chapter Five, are really an extension of the final chapter, "History and Physics," of that earlier work.

Here, longtime readers of Lukacs will find what they have been thirsting for, as Lukacs's continued investigations over the last 30 years have broken new ground. He has taken the scientific theories of theoretical physicist Werner Heisenberg and woven them together with his own expansion of linguist Owen Barfield's insights into the increasing intrusion of man's consciousness into the material world. The result is an advance in how we think about thinking itself. And that advance is not merely historical or philosophical but religious. While Lukacs is not exactly one to wear his Christianity on his sleeve, the Christian implications of his work (and Barfield's before him, particularly the latter's *Saving the Appearances*) are obvious. As I have argued elsewhere, the development of historical consciousness itself is inextricably bound up with the Incarnation of Christ, the meeting of Divine and human, the point at which the Timeless intersects His time-bound Creation. "And now—especially, but perhaps not exclusively for Christians—I must argue," Lukacs writes,

> for the recognition of our central situation not only in *space* but also in *time*. In sum, that the coming of Christ to this earth may have been? no, that it *was*, the *central* event of the universe; that the greatest, the most consequential event in the entire universe has occurred here, on this earth.

That God became a man and walked this earth demonstrates the centrality of history to man's nature—and it should give pause to post-Christian "Christians" (whether evangelical, fundamentalist, mainline Protestant, or even neo-Thomist) whose vision of Christ has degenerated into an ahistorical set of platitudes and "universal" principles. As Lukacs writes,

> All of us have known many non-Christians who have acted in Christian ways, thus being *animae naturaliter cristianae*; and we also know many sincerely believing Christians whose expressions may show alarmingly non-Christian thoughts in their minds. . . . [W]hat we think we believe is not always what we really believe. Our thinking—our ideas—will necessarily have their consequences. *Some* of our beliefs ought to.

By becoming a man, Christ redeemed history; in our post-Christian age, perhaps history—for some, at least—can redeem man, by leading him back to Christ. That may not have John Lukacs's purpose in writing *At the End of an Age*; it might, however, be one result.

Scott P. Richert is the executive editor of Chronicles.

Bad News From Africa

by Jeffrey Meyers

Dark Star Safari: Overland From Cairo to Capetown
by Paul Theroux
Boston: Houghton Mifflin; 496 pp., $28.00

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In previous books, now classics of travel writing, Paul Theroux described his long train journeys through India and Russia, South America, and China; his ramblings around England and the Mediterranean; his paddling through Oceania. More interested in people and landscape than in history and art, Theroux combines description and interpretation with social criticism and political commentary. He prefers a rough to a comfortable journey, popular to high culture, colloquial to mandarin style. He is engagingly frank about backward and brutal people, boring voyages, and self-created torments and believes the great traveler must also be a great masochist. Theroux would agree with D.H. Lawrence that "travel seems to me a splendid lesson in disillusion."

Cecil Rhodes had once planned to link the ends of Africa with a Cape-to-Cairo railroad, which was never completed. A century later, Theroux has followed this route and described it in his book. He traveled from Cairo by boat, bus, and cattle truck, and from Nairobi by rail, Lake Victoria steamer, and dugout canoe on the Zambezi south to Capetown.

Theroux's journey took him down the east side of the continent, through Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa. He talked to Nobel Prize-winners Naguib Mahfouz in Cairo and Nadine Gordimer in Johannesburg—but did not get much out of them. The cities, until the very end of the trip, blurred into a grim similarity:

> traffic-clogged Cairo, overheated Khartoum, crumbling tin-roofed Addis, crime-ridden Nairobi, disorderly Kampala, demoralized Dar es Salaam, ragged Lilongwe, desperate Blantyre, and battle-scarred and bombed-out Beira.

But Theroux carefully distinguishes among the ten countries. In Egypt, he saw the almost buried-in-the-sand temples that afforded a close-up view of the tops of the huge, sculpted capitals and interior ceilings. The Sudan offered the motley-dressed spinning and wheeling dervishes; the birds, ruins, and oases in the bright, unpeopled desert; the tall, dark, hawk-nosed great-grandson of the Mahdi who had beheaded General Gordon; and the "good," warm-hearted Muslims who have been waging a genocidal war against the pagans in the south for the last 30 years. In Ethiopia, kites swept down on Theroux and grazed his scalp with their talons, while packs of predatory hyenas prowled the streets and tore camel meat—the hump as smooth and white as cheese—from human hands during ritualistic feedings.

Uganda, where crocodiles ate 43 fishermen within six months, "seemed a tidier, better-governed place than Kenya," which has had a thoroughly rotten government since independence. Tanzania was also in precipitous decay—"more people, grubbier buildings, more litter, fewer trees, more poachers, less game"

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than before. Even the once-exotic Zanzibar, suffused with the fragrance of cloves, "was an island of smelly alleys and sulky Muslims." In Malawi—land of prostrate forests, dusty roads, and thriving coffin-makers for AIDS victims—the handsome school he had taught in as a Peace Corps volunteer "was almost unrecognizable . . . a compound of battered buildings in a muddy open field." The seed he had sown had never sprouted and was now decayed and moribund.

Mozambique, once a Portuguese colony, "was not a country in decline—this part of it, anyway, could not fall any farther." Maputo (the old Lourenço Marques), "much praised as a desirable destination, was a dreary, beat-up city of desperate people." Zimbabwe had a "fearsome reputation for political mayhem" and "was growing worse: dangerous, disrupted, dispirited" (now, after the expropriation of white farms, even more disastrous than when he was there). In South Africa, which had "fifty-five murders a day, a rape every twenty-three seconds," almost everything (including crime) worked better than in the rest of Africa. Theroux made a modest contribution to the crime statistics when all his valuables were stolen from the padlocked strong room in his Johannesburg hotel.

Theroux is an ideal guide through Africa. He lived in what is now Malawi and in Uganda in the 1960's, and he speaks Swahili. He has read the 19th-century explorers: Burton and Speke, Stanley and Livingstone, as well as Flaubert, Rimbaud, and Conrad. Curious and observant, patient and sympathetic, tolerant and tough, he is also—"by avoiding predators . . . staying alert, and not going out at night"—very lucky. Contented with very little, he endures, even enjoys, hardship. Gentler than in his previous books, he tells us about the roads and transport, food and weather, landscape and wildlife. He maintains a nice balance between historical background, informative encounters, and ugly incidents.

Theroux particularly dislikes the all-too-comfortable foreign-aid workers and the cocooned, pampered safari tourists, both of whom have an unrealistic, self-serving, and ultimately useless view of Africa. He concedes that aid workers do some good but believes (perhaps too harshly) that

> only Africans were capable of making a difference in Africa. Everyone else, donors and volunteers and bankers, however idealistic, were simply agents of subversion. . . . They were no more than a maintenance crew on a power trip, who had turned Malawians into beggars and whiners, and development into a study in futility.

Theroux contrasts the luxurious animal-watching, even animal-hunting safaris, with his own desperate struggles with "fungal infections, petty extortion, mocking lepers, dreary bedrooms, bad food, exploding bowels, fleeing animals, rotting schoolrooms, meaningless delays, and blunt threats." The traveling masochist evokes both pity and terror for what he has suffered. At the end of his arduous journey, however, he, too, like a teetotaler who has succumbed to drink, treats himself to a well-earned animal safari and spends a pleasant week at a game reserve near Kruger National Park, peering at wild creatures.

His familiar, engaging style is laced with subtly effective allusions to the Bible, Pliny, and Shakespeare; Shelley, Poe, and Twain; Wilde, Yeats, and Joyce. His descriptions range from the horrific ("most trains in Africa look as if they are on their way to Auschwitz") to the lyrical ("bolts of lightning exploded inside the dark clouds, illuminating them for a few seconds, making them seem blacker" and the mysterious "trotting sound, not one animal but lots of tiny hooves, like a multitude of gazelle fawns" that signaled the coming of the rain). In this book, Theroux triumphantly realizes his ideal of successfully recreating in prose "the texture and emotions of a real place."

Theroux's great theme, and the impulse that drove him southward, is the search for his own youthful idealism and personal history, the desire to discover "what happened to Africa while I had been elsewhere." The news is bad and matches Ryszard Kapuscinski's dire conclusions in his book on Africa, *The Shadow of the Sun* (2001). Theroux finds thieves beaten to death by rampaging mobs; tortures and executions (mock and real); "ineradicable miseries: famine, displacement, poverty, AIDS, the ravages of war . . . starving people in a blighted land governed by tyrants, rumors of unspeakable atrocities, despair and darkness." After four decades of independence, Africa has "a lower standard of living, a higher rate of illiteracy, overpopulation, and much more disease." The Africa that Theroux had known (and that I, too, knew when I spent two hopeful summers there in the 1960's) "had disappeared, had become anarchic and violent."

Dark Star Safari belongs with the best, and often grimmest, modern travel books on Africa: Evelyn Waugh's *Remote People* (1931); Ernest Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa* (1934); Shiva Naipaul's *North of South* (1978); and V.S. Naipaul's *Finding the Centre* (1984). Theroux's attitude is more positive than Arthur Rimbaud's famous lamentation, when he worked as a trader in Harar, Abyssinia, in 1888:

> It's a wretched life anyway, don't you think—no family, no intellectual activity, lost among negroes who try to exploit you and make it impossible to settle business quickly? Forced to speak their gibberish, to eat their filthy food and suffer a thousand aggravations caused by their idleness, treachery and stupidity!

Theroux's lively yet dispiriting book shows—despite improvements in education, medicine, and transportation—that conditions have not changed all that much for the independent traveler in the last 115 years.

Jeffrey Meyers is the author of Inherited Risk: Errol and Sean Flynn in Hollywood and Vietnam, The Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Reader, *and the forthcoming* Somerset Maugham: A Biography.

The Imitation of Christ

by Tobias J. Lanz

Against the Machine: The Hidden Luddite Tradition in Literature, Art and Individual Lives
by Nicols Fox
Washington, D.C.: Island Press; 405 pp., $25.00

◆

Faith in technology is one of the central tenets of the modern age. Because technological development is equated with progress, the technological worldview has been adopted by virtually every ideology and political regime the world

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over. All technology is good; more is better. Those who criticize this orthodoxy are seen as delusional or, worse, as dangerous. Speaking against technology is heresy. Thus, whenever antitechnological ideas and social movements take shape, they are ridiculed by the intelligentsia and often ruthlessly suppressed by governments. Still, the rage against the machine has had a long intellectual and political tradition. Since the Industrial Revolution, these ideas have been articulated and even developed into something of a coherent corpus. Today, despite the increasing spread of technology, they are as alive as ever. *Against the Machine* traces the origins of these ideas as they developed in the West over the last 200 years among artists, philosophers, and writers.

Nicols Fox is a veteran journalist and author who has written largely about the food industry and food-borne diseases. Her foray into the history of antitechnology was sparked by her own frustrations with technology and an awareness of the growing debate over its detrimental social and psychological consequences. Modern societies are characterized by anger, cynicism, and "stress," all of which she believes are ultimately attributed to rapid technological change and the integration of technology into almost every facet of human existence. The orthodox belief in the inherent goodness (or, at least, necessity) of technology transcends the ideological spectrum; similarly, antitechnological ideas and movements have been promoted by reactionaries and progressives alike. Fox, however, devotes the bulk of her book to an examination of the ideas of liberal and leftist thinkers—thus clearly revealing her own ideological bias.

Fox begins with a brief chapter on a neo-Luddite couple, Arthur and Nan Kellam, who left the comforts of suburbia to settle on a secluded island off the coast of Maine after World War II, where they lived without electricity and other modern comforts for some 40 years, until they died in old age. Fox intends this example to underscore the fact that the tradition of simple living, while unbeknownst to mainstream America, has not been just for a few antisocial kooks; rather, many people have pursued it for generations. Subsequent chapters discuss the development of the Luddite tradition, and of the broader notion of freedom from industrial and urban society, by Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Morris, and naturalists John Muir and Aldo Leopold. Fox also gives space to an assortment of 20th-century agrarian and environmental thinkers.

While the focus of the neo-Luddites has changed over two centuries, consistent themes unite their thinking. Nineteenth-century criticism focused on the displacement of artisans by machines, the despoliation of the countryside, and the abysmal conditions of rapidly expanding cities. Twentieth-century critics have examined broader trends, such as the development of a technological society and its inordinate power over human beings and the natural world, resulting in a diminution of personal freedom, of moral and aesthetic standards, of countryside and wilderness, of human relations, and of culture and civilization. Fox alludes to the spiritual vacuum that has occurred as a result of the widespread dependence on technology—without ever fully developing this theme and while offering the usual platitudinous remarks about Eastern religions having a more harmonious and less controlling and exploitative view of nature than Christianity does. (Never mind that Asia has some of the worst environmental problems on earth.)

Fox spends even less time examining Christian perspectives on technology. This failure is the central flaw of the book, which leads the reader to believe that Christian thinkers were either silent about or wholly supportive of the inexorable spread of technology over the last two centuries. Moreover, by omitting religious thinkers, Fox also omits most conservative thinkers from consideration. She does spend a few pages discussing the Southern Agrarians, complimenting their valiant intellectual efforts to defend their culture from the ravages of industrialization and even acknowledging that, despite the presence of slavery, agrarian life in the South had something worth preserving. In the end, though, Fox declares that conservatives do not have a monopoly on shared tradition or community.

Another Christian intellectual and social movement that Fox completely bypasses is the English distributist movement of the 1920's and 30's. G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Fr. Vincent McNabb, and a host of others went much further in their critiques of industrialization and its effects than any of their secular liberal contemporaries did. Theirs was a coherent political, cultural, and economic program that sought to counter industrialization and the capitalist and socialist ideologies that promoted it, and it was profoundly shaped by Church teaching and tradition. Fox does discuss the work of economist E.F. Schumacher, whose "Small Is Beautiful" formulation is closely linked to that of distributism. Similarly, Christian principles helped to solidify Schumacher's thinking and made him realize the importance of developing an economy based on the human scale. Yet, the fact that this onetime adherent of Buddhism later became a Catholic and was heavily influenced by the social teachings of the Church is never mentioned.

Fox makes ample reference to the French sociologist Jacques Ellul (1912-96), best known for his seminal work, *The Technological Society*. Ellul saw the problem of technology as the manifestation of a deeper philosophical problem inherent in the proliferation of "technique," which he defined as the fixation on means over ends. This process of never-ending analysis and the implementation of techniques to solve social and scientific "problems" through the development of institutions or machines has created unparalleled human power and, with it, unparalleled human anxiety and alienation. Fox neglects to explore these finer theoretical points in any detail; nor does she mention that Ellul was also a Christian theologian—a follower of Karl Barth who believed that the only way out of technological totalitarianism is the pursuit of a strategy of Christian anarchy. This alternative would require Christians to remove themselves from the grip of the machine and to form small communities where they can live disciplined spiritual and material lives based on the example of Christ's own humble existence.

Many of the author's omissions can doubtless be attributed to simple ignorance. Unfortunately, hers is an ignorance that is shared by most latter-day Christians, few of whom are exposed to any coherent critique of the encroachment of technology and its real and potential threats to society and spiritual life. (Christians cannot even agree on the immorality of abortion, let alone of such insidious technological "breakthroughs" as cloning.) This naiveté is surprising, given that religion has declined precipitously in virtually every country where technology reigns (the so-called industrial democracies); by contrast, religious skepticism is rare in agrarian societies. One might suggest that the technological society has developed its own brand of faith—

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a faith no longer bound to the Creator and His Creation but to Man and Production and rooted ultimately in an undying commitment to rationalism, of which technology is the most tangible material consequence.

As Nicols Fox emphasizes in her concluding chapter, the technological juggernaut cannot be halted or ignored. However, if enough people begin to regard the development and use of technology with a measure of healthy skepticism rather than with blind faith or indifference, its impact can at least be controlled. For Christians, the approach to all things technological requires an even more vigilant stand. First, living the simple life that Christ taught is the best way to keep technology at bay at the individual and family levels. Second, in society, Christians must maintain a vigilant watch over the new technological priesthood and its designs for an earthly heaven. Prudence with respect to the development and use of all technologies, from automobiles to genetic engineering, is essential to protect our Faith, our culture, and our sanity.

Tobias J. Lanz teaches politics at the University of South Carolina.

Nothing Is Dead

by J.O. Tate

Return to Good & Evil: Flannery O'Connor's Response to Nihilism
by Henry T. Edmondson III
Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books; 203 pp., $24.95

◆

Since she died in 1964 at the age of 39, Flannery O'Connor has not receded from literary awareness nor from a larger consciousness we might call philosophical or spiritual or religious. Her place in the literary canon is secure in part because her reputation rests on more than the mere acknowledgment of authorities, many of whom have done everything they could to undermine critical authority. Her reputation is greater than that simply of an accomplished artist because she has appealed to (and sometimes appalled) people of various dispositions. Though she was never a popular writer, she was vitally aware of popular culture and of vulgarity. And though she insisted that her stories had to stand on their own merits, she was also vitally attuned to the *Zeitgeist*. Her letters have shown how committed she was to her own education and to the study of literature, philosophy, and religion; her success has been, in great part, the fusion of these levels of consciousness in fictions that are at once tense and lucid, as well as violent and comic, in their articulation of the conflict of the spirit and the flesh.

Flannery O'Connor has inspired so much comment and analysis—some of it necessary, some of it academic, and some of it spiteful—that we may wonder whether further reflections are justified. And it is just at this point that Henry Edmondson has registered his contribution. A professor of political philosophy at O'Connor's own *alma mater*, he has seen her from a particularly productive angle—the philosophical one.

Professor Edmondson has done everything he could to justify his approach; this includes an investigation into the details of O'Connor's undergraduate study at what was the Georgia State College for Women, where she took classes during World War II. He has grounded his study of O'Connor in her response to Nietzsche, whom she encountered in *The Making of the Modern Mind*, a textbook by John Randall assigned in "Introduction to Modern Philosophy," which she took in the spring of 1945. Tracing what O'Connor read about Nietzsche at a formative age, Edmondson can convincingly claim that the Spirit of the Age that O'Connor addressed was well defined by the prophetic German who advocated going beyond good and evil, thus escaping traditional values in general and Christianity in particular. As Randall's textbook puts it, Nietzsche's "ideals are sufficiently in accord with the underlying spirit of the modern age . . . [as] to be fraught with great significance." O'Connor's own ideals, of course, were embodied by Christian orthodoxy, the reasoned Faith of the Church, and her own continuing study of the Bible and such contemporary philosophers as Maritain, Voegelin, and Guardini. In making his own argument regarding the philosophical clashes figured forth in O'Connor's work, Edmondson has no doubt been of much service, and not only to the reader of O'Connor.

It is one thing to argue about ideas, however, and another to bring them to life. Flannery O'Connor bet the farm, as far as her writing goes, on fiction, which Edmondson reminds us is radical and philosophically grounded. In fiction, however, the clash of ideas is not so much logical as it is dramatic and ironic. The savage reduction and ideational shorthand that are required for successful fiction of a philosophical bent are rare things and place O'Connor within a tradition that has not been well defined. Though she claimed, with good reason, to be a regionalist, I think her work belongs, or also belongs, to what Vladimir Nabokov called "universal fiction," by which I think he meant more than the widely admired classics. I mean a tradition that would embrace such writers as Aristophanes, Petronius, Lucian, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Swift, the Voltaire of *Candide*, the darker Melville and Twain, as well as the obvious Poe and Hawthorne, Gogol and Dostoyevsky, and that notable Nietzschean Wyndham Lewis.

The tradition of the *reductio ad absurdum* is part of the philosophical tradition in fiction and dramaturgy, and some of O'Connor's work has powerful affinities with that tradition. The sound of dark laughter says something about the influence of Nathanael West and even Stephen Crane, both of whom touched O'Connor, and both of whom were closer to Nietzsche than they were to her in their values, though not in their sensibility or their technique. And I will go so far as to say that a kick to the stump of an amputated leg in Lewis's *Revenge for Love* may well have been, in its cruelty and political nuance, an inspiration for the theft of an artificial leg in O'Connor's greatest story, "Good Country People." Stuck in the hayloft and crawling in abnegation, if not in shame, Joy/Hulga is the farmer's daughter of an old dirty joke everyone knows except her. This atheistic Ph.D. is left without a leg to stand on, and so is her philosophy. And her rather ugly adopted name, "Hulga," is an anagram of "laugh." The joke, ultimately a philosophical one, is on her. This tale of obscene humiliation or grotesquely necessary revelation is, strangely enough, based on "real life," for O'Connor always claimed that her stories existed *in potential*. Strangely enough, much of the story is an attack on aspects of herself, and no female (not to mention males) ever wrote with more brass. Even better, with the citation of Malebranche and the unattributed quotation from Heidegger in her text, we have an explicit *philosophical* fiction—one that perhaps alludes distantly to that

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one-legged thinker Captain Ahab and his own long-delayed comeuppance.

Because Flannery O'Connor left the inscription of such feckless works as "The Yellow Wallpaper" and "I Stand Here Ironing" to others—and they are classified along with "Good Country People" in today's anthologies—she has been a problematical subject for the technically female and technically unfemale powers that be. She has not been problematical for Henry Edmondson—quite the opposite, in fact. Explaining that Hazel Motes' "high rat-colored" car is "hieratic," he has shown his affinity for his subject and demonstrated an original understanding of her work. Realigned, refreshed, and reinforced by his distinctive exposition, we put down his study with our comprehension enhanced, ready once again to address ourselves to Flannery O'Connor.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

A Classic Reconsidered

by R. Cort Kirkwood

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit
by Sloan Wilson
New York: Four Walls Eight Windows; 276 pp., $13.95

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Do not look for last year's best novel piled high in a fancy stack at the Books-A-Million or B. Dalton, with the *belles lettres* of Tom Clancy or John Grisham, because the best novel of 2002 was written 48 years ago. *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, by Sloan Wilson (recently deceased), hit the shelves in 1955. A small, progressive outfit in New York, Four Walls Eight Windows, has reissued the book, once the literary lodestar for the counterculture that bloomed in the late 50's. The title has been part of the American argot ever since, and for good reason: It's catchy. In three words—*gray, flannel, suit*—it summarizes what the counterculture wanted us to believe about ourselves: The American male was a conforming, drab automaton, enslaved by the American corporation.

Such might have been a warranted evaluation of our culture in the 1950's, but that isn't the book's theme. Rather, the motif of *Gray Flannel* is a man's struggle with honesty about himself and his past and the question of whether, by telling the truth, he can build a career within a giant corporation while—more importantly—keeping his wife.

The gray-flannel man is Tom Rath, a writer for a philanthropic foundation. He applies for a job at the United Broadcasting Company and lands one running a mental-health campaign for its president, Ralph Hopkins. At work, Rath faces his first temptation to shade the truth. With some difficulty, he is drafting a speech for Hopkins, an intelligent, gregarious, generous boss. Rath cannot get it quite right, but when Hopkins and another assistant, an unctuous jackass named Ogden, craft their own oratory, Hopkins seeks Rath's opinion. The speech is execrable. Rath fears speaking candidly, however, from fear that Hopkins might fire him. Rath's wife, Betsy, a dutiful if nearly shrewish woman, sets him straight. Early in the book, she tells her husband, "You've got no guts." That isn't true: During World War II, Rath killed 17 men, some in hand-to-hand combat. When Rath explains how he will criticize the speech without really criticizing it, however, he does seem to have lost his nerve.

"I think that's a little sickening," Betsy declares. "What do you really think of that speech?"

"I think it's terrible," Rath replies.

"I don't care what you tell him," his wife says, "but I don't like the idea of you becoming a cheap cynical yes-man." Later, she adds, "You can't imagine being honest and getting a raise for it."

No, Rath cannot. As a paratrooper, he faced death in the war, yet now he fears telling the truth about a speech. He knows what happens to men who tell the emperor about his clothes. The penalty, it seems, is worse than death.

Rath's second temptation to lie occurs when he must unbosom an even more distasteful confession to his wife. During World War II in Italy, he shacked up with a winsome girl, who bore him a son after Rath shipped out for the Pacific. Rath left the girl and the war behind him, but, ten years later, he learns the woman and his bastard child need help. He shoulders the paternal duty to support his illegitimate son, while understanding that he can not send a check on a regular basis to Italy and hide the fact from his wife.

None of this sounds like a "damning account of the inhumanity of big business," as the publisher's overheated press release puts it. That is because *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is not a "damning account" of anything, except, perhaps, dishonesty. Nor is the novel an indictment of "conformity"—an erroneous if popular misconception. Granted, Rath must "conform" in some sense to succeed at UBC. But he learns that Hopkins paid dearly for his own success. At the beginning of the book, Rath asks himself: "What did a man have to be like to make so damn much money?" And he finds out. Hopkins is estranged from his wife. His teenage daughter is an irresponsible butterfly on the Manhattan cocktail circuit. He barely knew his son, who was killed in the war. Hopkins has wrecked his personal life, and, to justify this, he erupts in a testy spiel about the kind of men who build a corporate colossus like UBC. They are not men like Tom Rath, who trundle home to a wife and a passel of noisy brats at 5 P.M. Rath understands that, and, in the novel's ultimate moment of truth, he tells Hopkins, in so many words, "I will not become you."

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit is a regular guy who, after serving his country, triumphs over the temptation to shirk his obligations and to lie. Simple decency and manly courage inspire him to do what is right by his boss, while rectifying and atoning for the sins of his past. These victories, in turn, enable him to face the future like a man.

R. Cort Kirkwood is managing editor of the Daily News-Record *in Harrisonburg, Virginia. His articles have appeared in* Chronicles, National Review, *and other publications.*

LIBERAL ARTS

WHAT PRICE DIGNITY?

"The music director at Rockford's largest Catholic church had a choice: give up his gay partner of 10 years or lose his job.

"When Bill Stein refused to take a vow of chastity Tuesday, he was fired from his position at Holy Family.

"'I was honest. I walked out of the office without a job, but I had my dignity,' Stein said."

—from "Church music director fired over vow refusal" by Edith C. Webster, Rockford Register Star *(June 24)*

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by Samuel Francis

The Great Crackpot Crackdown

Within a few days of the American conquest of Iraq, it was obvious that the Bush administration's "War on Terrorism" was a monumental flop that has probably endangered the United States and Americans abroad far more than it has protected them. Not only were American soldiers being slowly picked off by snipers inside Iraq but terrorist bombings in Saudi Arabia and Morocco showed clearly that the conquest of two countries since the September 11 attacks had accomplished nothing toward the destruction or incapacitation of the international terrorist network. Rather ignominiously, the administration was obliged to declare the country at the "threat level" of "orange" ("high risk") and close the U.S. embassy in Riyadh. For all the triumphalist chest-thumping, cheerleading, and self-righteous crowing from the President himself down to the lowest stomper of Dixie Chicks albums, it was transparent that the United States was in retreat, not the terrorists.

Unable to catch, kill, or defeat any real terrorists, the administration has simply selected phony ones to harass as much as possible, and the most accessible fake terrorists are the "extremists" of the far right. Many of them are, in fact, extremists by any reasonable definition, and not a few are downright repellent. Nevertheless, the government—for all its "crackdown" on them and their tasteless websites—has yet to show that they have committed any serious criminal offense (even, in some cases, any offense at all), let alone plotted, committed, or even seriously thought about terrorism.

Late in May, the *Washington Post* detailed the federal government's intrepid apprehension of such "hate group" leaders in a story consigned to its "Metro" section, because the main case it discussed involved a gentleman in Northern Virginia named Byron Cecchini.

Mr. Cecchini is what the *Post* calls a "self-described white supremacist," whose website boasts historical photographs of lynched blacks and the usual antisemitica beloved of such minds as the one Mr. Cecchini seems to possess. Nevertheless, the warrant for the search of his house, seizure of his person, and confiscation of his computer and files by federal authorities could accuse him of no specific criminal conduct. All it alleged was that Mr. Cecchini had a "violent criminal history" and "probably owned weapons," as the *Post* reported. In the course of scrutinizing the bizarre apparatus the warrant uncovered, the feds found T-shirts that Mr. Cecchini was selling that sported, in place of the word "Nike," the word "Nazi." That was enough to justify the nighttime raid of Mr. Cecchini's house and hauling him off to jail—for the heinous crime of trademark violation!

The *Post* reported several similar cases of federal arrests of "white supremacists," "hate group leaders," "extremists," and similar species but was unable to specify any serious crime charged to any of them. The worst offenses it could find were "firearms violations" allegedly committed by a Pennsylvania Klansman, who supposedly desired to buy grenades and bomb abortion clinics. But the *Post* was alert to what the government was up to:

> It is a tactic being used with increasing success nationwide as authorities step up efforts to curb domestic hate and terror groups: prosecute any illegal activity by known extremists and, at the same time, work to infiltrate potentially dangerous groups to guard against future attacks.

No "hate group" in this country has committed any act of terrorism, of course, despite the habit of some bigmouths on the far right of spouting off about how much they admire Osama bin Laden and how many buildings they would like to blow up. Yet, as the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 shows, sometimes a crackpot takes their mouthing seriously and actually commits an act of terror. For that reason, both local and federal authorities ought to keep such characters under at least minimal investigation, but the "tactic" of actually arresting and charging them with more-or-less fabricated offenses goes well beyond any reasonable policy of counterterrorism and well beyond what should be tolerated in a free country. But that's just the point, isn't it?

The "tactic" deployed by the federal government is a pretty clear method of closing down dissent on the right, starting with individuals and groups so far out on the fringe that few will miss them or care whether they are arrested, imprisoned, or suppressed at all but working its way toward individuals and groups that are not so far out and who support, not causes like lynching blacks and blowing up abortion clinics, but halting immigration, stopping abortion, defending the Confederate flag, opposing the normalization of homosexuality, supporting the Second Amendment, advocating an isolationist or America First foreign policy, and similar causes that lie well within what even today remains a "respectable" conservative orbit. So far, I know of no government efforts to suppress or harass such movements, but skeptics should recall Martin Niemöller's famous remark that "First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Communist," *etc.* Hackneyed as the passage is (and as uncertain as Niemöller's not being a communist is—he accepted the Lenin Prize from the Soviets in 1967), it expresses an important and relevant truth that "mainstream" conservatives of whatever ideological orientation ought to think about.

Indeed, to their credit, some conservatives are thinking about it, as evidenced by the joint press conference held some months ago by ex-Rep. Bob Barr, the American Conservative Union, and similar conservative activists in Washington to object to the government's "Patriot Act" and its enhancement in "Patriot II" legislation not yet introduced in Congress, and Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) has made similar statements. Not all conservatives share the misgivings of these spokesmen, however. Sen. Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, wants to pass legislation that would make per-

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manent the restrictions on civil liberties and the enhanced federal power granted temporarily in the current Patriot Act, while who should pop up to defend the Patriot Act but those Patriotic Conservatives at *National Review*.

In the June 2 issue of *National Review*, Ramesh Ponnuru rakes over the coals conservatives who have criticized the act and other measures adopted by the federal government since the September 11 attacks and finds nothing amiss with the creeping encroachments on civil liberties. "A calm look at the Patriot Act," he writes, "shows that it's less of a threat to civil liberties than, say, campaign finance reform." Mr. Ponnuru may be correct that some conservative (and liberal) criticisms of the act are misplaced, but his zeal in defending the legislation and the general thrust of increased government power shows how much we can count on a unified conservative resistance to the trend. Some "conservatives" will object; some won't. So meaningless has the "conservative" label now become that predicting how those who wear it will respond to any proposed course of government action is virtually impossible.

If, like Ponnuru, you approve of Patriot I, you'll adore Patriot II. In an analysis of the proposed law, the American Civil Liberties Union maintains that

> Under the Patriot Act [II], any individual or group that breaks the law with the intent of influencing the government can be labeled a terrorist if their activities are "dangerous to human life." Under that definition, diverse "direct-action" organizations, including Operation Rescue or the World Trade Organization protesters, could be labeled "terrorist organizations."

According to a similar analysis published by the leftish Center for Public Integrity, Section 501 of the new act

> would establish that an American citizen could be expatriated "if, with the intent to relinquish his nationality, he becomes a member of, or provides material support to, a group that the United States has designated as a 'terrorist organization.'" But whereas a citizen formerly had to state his intent to relinquish his citizenship, the new law affirms that his intent can be "inferred from conduct." Thus, engaging in the lawful activities of a group designated as a "terrorist organization" by the Attorney General could be presumptive grounds for expatriation.

And how, exactly, does a group become a "terrorist organization"? Among other ways, according to William Jasper in the *New American* (May 5), Section 423 states that "the term 'designated terrorist organization' means an organization which . . . is designated as a terrorist organization by an Executive Order" or under the authority of various federal laws already on the books. A "terrorist organization" can also be a single person "listed or designated by an Executive Order as supporting terrorist activity." In other words, apparently the president of the United States would be able to designate any person or any group, from Laura Bush to the imperial wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, as a "terrorist" or "terrorist organization" and thereby effectively strip him of his citizenship and expel him from the United States. I admit that I have not read the text of the proposed act, which is 86 pages of legalese and has not yet, as far as I know, been officially released to the public (CPI has published a draft on its website), but if even half of what its critics on both the left and the right say about it is true, then it is undeniable that the Bush administration is intentionally seeking to transform the United States into a police state.

The crackdown on the crackpots of the far right, then, may be merely a kind of test run for the masters of the new order to see how well their agents can carry out what will soon be routine functions and to test the public reaction to their new "tactic." While left-wing outfits like the ACLU and the Center for Public Integrity have been outspoken in their opposition to Patriot II, the right will probably receive the most attention from the new Gestapo. Before the war with Iraq, for example, it was common for "movement conservatives" to grouse about the massive antiwar rallies being organized by the Workers World Party, a left-communist group that allegedly has received secret funding from the North Korean government to finance its antiwar activism. If those allegations contain any truth, there would be good reason for the federal government to take a hard look at the party and its leaders, to launch a full investigation of its funding, and to inform the media about what is going on. But nothing has happened to the extreme, anti-American, antiwar left. All the crackdown has been directed at the right, at small, unimportant, ugly, but largely harmless "groups" that contain barely a handful of transient followers, have no influence or standing, receive virtually no funding from anyone, and have committed no serious crimes. "You prosecute who [*sic*] you can prosecute," one "law enforcement source" chuckled to the *Washington Post* after Mr. Cecchini was busted for invading the rights of Nike. It's safe and easy to prosecute the extreme right, not only because the "extremists" of the far right rarely shoot back but because no "conservatives" (least of all *National Review* and its squadrons of "Patriots") will object or care—and many may even cheer the government on—while the left, if not actually pressuring the government to suppress the right, will lodge only ceremonial objections, to prove how committed to "civil liberties" it is.

It might be nice, while the nation is at the "orange" level of terrorism alert, for the government actually to arrest a few real terrorists instead of merely prosecuting whomever it thinks it can throw in jail with a minimum of effort and danger. Some years ago, I coined the term "anarcho-tyranny" to describe the kind of government that is evolving in the United States and the Western world in general, a form of rule in which the state either refuses or is unable to enforce the law against real criminals (anarchy) and, therefore, concocts new laws that criminalize the innocent and punishes them (tyranny). Gun control and the foolish "drug war" of the Bush I era are examples of anarcho-tyrannical policies, but the "war on terrorism" of the Bush II era takes the prize. So far, it has failed to end the quite real danger of foreign Islamic terrorism and, for all the vast military and governmental power at its disposal, has proved itself unable even to reduce the level of threats to this country; at the same time, however, it has managed to alarm both the left and the right about the authoritarian direction of its efforts and the threat to liberty it poses. The logical and natural culmination of anarcho-tyranny is, of course, tyranny pure and simple, and with the now dominant neoconservative "right" and its "religious right" allies fully on board with the emerging federal police state, there appears to be little reason to expect any effective resistance to the trend that could prevent it from winding up at that destination. ◦c

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by Scott P. Richert

WWMD?

I want to speak to you today about war and empire.

Killing, or at least the worst of it, is over in Iraq. Although blood will continue to spill—theirs and ours—be prepared for this. For we are embarking on an occupation that, if history is any guide, will be as damaging to our souls as it will be to our prestige, power, and security. But this will come later as our empire expands and in all this we become pariahs, tyrants to others weaker than ourselves. Isolation always impairs judgment and we are very isolated now.

We have forfeited the good will, the empathy the world felt for us after 9-11. We have folded in on ourselves, we have severely weakened the delicate international coalitions and alliances that are vital in maintaining and promoting peace and we are part now of a dubious troika in the war against terror with Vladimir Putin and Ariel Sharon, two leaders who do not shrink in Palestine or Chechnya from carrying out . . . gratuitous and senseless acts of violence. We have become the company we keep.

—*Chris Hedges, Rockford College commencement (May 17)*

I read about some squirrely guy,
Who claims, he just don't believe
in fightin'.
An' I wonder just how long,
The rest of us can count on bein' free.
They love our milk an' honey,
But they preach about some other
way of livin'.
When they're runnin' down my
country, hoss,
They're walkin' on the fightin' side
of me.

—*Merle Haggard, "The Fightin' Side of Me"*

When Rockford makes the national news (I once wrote), you can be certain that the story will not be positive and upbeat. That observation held true in mid-May, when the commencement ceremonies at Rockford College were marred by (depending, it appears, almost entirely on your view on the war in Iraq) either commencement speaker and *New York Times* correspondent Chris Hedges or (according to the most reliable estimates) anywhere from 50 to 200 students and guests (out of a crowd of 2,000) who responded to Hedges' speech with various behaviors, from turning their backs on the podium to shouting Hedges down to, on at least two occasions, pulling the plug on his microphone. While similar incidents had occurred at scores of speeches delivered by conservatives and establishment Republicans in the 60's, 70's, and 80's, there was one important difference that may help explain the level of national attention: Hedges is an outspoken liberal, and those who disrupted his speech were, presumably, pro-war "conservatives."

On the evening of May 17, when Kathy and Bethany Lewis, who had volunteered at the commencement, told me about the disturbance, it was inevitable that I would hear Merle Haggard's voice singing inside my head. I was born in 1968, so most of my memories are post-Vietnam, but "The Fightin' Side of Me" and "Okie From Muskogee" seem to form the soundtrack to my early life. (My father still has the live album that Merle recorded in Muskogee.) The lyrics fit well with the reflexive patriotism of a young boy growing up in a small town that was, at that time, still largely untouched by the social forces that were remaking America. Even today, when my views on Gulf War II are much closer to Chris Hedges' than to Paul Wolfowitz's (though I do not share Hedges' ideological pacifism), a certain nostalgia sweeps over me when I hear "The Fightin' Side of Me"—a far different reaction from the revulsion I feel when Toby Keith's chest-thumping "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue" comes blaring across my radio:

Oh, Justice will be served and the
battle will rage.
This big dog will fight when you
rattle his cage
You'll be sorry that you messed
with the US of A
'Cuz we'll put a boot in your ass
It's the American way.

Hey Uncle Sam put your name at
the top of his list,
And the Statue of Liberty started
shaking her fist.
And the eagle will fly,
And there's gonna be Hell,
When you hear Mother Freedom
start ringing her bell!
It's gonna feel like the whole wide
world is raining down on you . . .
Brought to you courtesy of the Red,
White and Blue!

In the uproar that followed in the wake of Hedges' speech, one thing became clear: Most Rockfordians, regardless of their position on the recent war, thought that the speech was inappropriate for a college commencement. With his monotone delivery and preachy introduction, Hedges came across more like a liberal clergyman than like the upbeat boosters usually called upon for such occasions. (Not surprisingly, Hedges is a former divinity student, and his father, to whom he dedicates his book *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, is an ordained minister.) Wade Provo, professor emeritus of French at Rockford College, aptly summed up the feelings of most Rockfordians in a letter that he submitted to the *Rockford Register Star*:

> Know your audience. Fit your remarks to the audience and the occasion, and do not alienate your listeners. Mr. Hedges needs to accept responsibility for violating these principles of effective communication.

(The *Register Star*, which had supported the war in Iraq and had published its account of the speech under the headline "Speaker disrupts Rockford College graduation," declined to print the letter.)

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Dr. Provo, however, went on to write that Hedges "alone incited the listeners and set a tone of condemnation on a day of celebration" and, in a separate letter, that "the non-violent protest only revealed the degree to which [the audience] felt Mr. Hedges had violated their right to a more positive experience." He concluded: "In a world where youth often seem apathetic, I found it refreshing that in this case we are not outraged by their silence."

Pace Dr. Provo, it may be wrong to lay the blame entirely at the speaker's feet. While Hedges has delivered similar speeches on college campuses, they have always been in political or discussion forums. This was his first commencement address, and, while he clearly misjudged the occasion, the more fundamental problem seems to be that Dr. Paul Pribbenow, the relatively new president of Rockford College, had asked Hedges to speak about war. Whether he had asked him to speak specifically about the war in Iraq is still unclear; in his most complete remarks on the incident, published as a column in the *Register Star*, Pribbenow offers conflicting testimony. On the one hand, he writes that:

> Once Hedges had begun his speech, which included criticism of the war in Iraq, I had the duty as president of the college to allow him to continue—no matter what I or the other members of the audience felt about his remarks.

On the other hand, he admits that "we hoped to have an address that would include a timely message for graduates about the world" and that

> We chose Hedges because his book about war is grounded in strong liberal arts scholarship and reflects a balanced perspective on war in human history and experience. We expected him to address the graduates through the lens of the book and his work as a war correspondent. Perhaps he would have—if he had been allowed to finish his speech.

It is hard to imagine how Hedges could have lived up to Dr. Pribbenow's expectations if he had simply ignored the war in Iraq and the ongoing "War on Terror."

The most disturbing aspect of the incident was highlighted by the national debate that raged for days afterward on talk radio and the Fox News Channel. Suddenly, conservatives who had complained for years about how liberal students and professors had made a mockery of academic freedom by shouting down Jeanne Kirkpatrick and Bill Bennett were defending the actions of the protesters and declaring, in the words of Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity, that it was about time that a liberal got a dose of the same medicine. Jonah Goldberg of *National Review Online*, who recently delivered his own first commencement speech (a mixture of puerile sexual innuendo and even less edifying neoconservative theorizing) to the graduating high-school seniors at Hillsdale Academy, slammed Hedges and offered to deliver next year's commencement speech at Rockford College for 75 percent of Hedges' honorarium. (While Goldberg mentioned the War on Terror in his address, he thoroughly approves of it, so presumably his remarks would not be considered inappropriate.)

Lost in all of the triumphal shouting of conservatives was any discussion of proper standards of civility and decorum, which was particularly disappointing in light of the relatively recent history of Rockford College (the very motto of which is *Decus et Veritas*). Under the presidency of Dr. John Howard, the college gained a reputation as a conservative school, though that reputation may have overstated the conservative commitment of its students and faculty. One thing is certain, however: Dr. Howard set a standard for behavior at the college that the protesters on May 17 did not meet. While he likely would not have invited a speaker to address such a sensitive topic on a festive occasion, it is equally unlikely that, during his tenure, students and guests would have behaved as they did.

(I should note that The Rockford Institute, the publisher of *Chronicles*, was the brainchild of Dr. Howard and began life as The Rockford College Institute. Since 1980, however, there has been no connection between the college and the Institute.)

In the long run, civility and decorum may be the greatest casualties of the Chris Hedges incident. The movement conservatives who praised the actions of the protesters no longer make even a pretense of holding themselves to a higher standard than they do their political adversaries. What can we expect, however, when the "conservative leaders" of today are the descendants of the liberal activists of yesteryear—or, in many cases, the very liberal activists themselves?

The United States changed quite a bit between 1970, when Merle Haggard recorded "The Fightin' Side of Me," and 1979, when he released his somber hit "I Wish a Buck Was Still Silver (Are the Good Times Really Over for Good)," and war was responsible for much of that change. And with the constant military activity—invasions, bombings, "peacekeeping missions," and outright (though undeclared) wars—of the Reagan, Bush I, Clinton, and Bush II years, that gulf has grown even wider. Compare the Merle of 1970—

> I hear people talkin' bad,
> About the way we have to live here
> in this country,
> Harpin' on the wars we fight,
> An' gripin' 'bout the way things
> oughta be.
> An' I don't mind 'em switchin
> sides,
> An' standin' up for things they
> believe in.
> When they're runnin' down my
> country, man,
> They're walkin' on the fightin'
> side of me.

—with the Merle of a 2000 interview on *Salon.com*:

> Look at the past 25 years—we went downhill, and if people don't realize it, they don't have their f---ing eyes on. In 1960, when I came out of prison as an ex-convict, I had more freedom under parolee supervision than there's available to an average citizen in America right now. . . . God almighty, what have we done to each other?

Indeed. As America is being remade in the imperial image of Paul Wolfowitz, Bill Kristol, and Richard Perle, who, today, are the real patriots? Two hundred and twenty-seven years into our nation's history, The Hag's final warning may apply less to that "squirrely guy" than to those to whom the reins of power have been entrusted:

> If you don't love it, leave it:
> Let this song I'm singin' be a
> warnin'.
> If you're runnin' down my country,
> man,
> You're walkin' on the fightin' side
> of me.

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Letter to the Bishop

by Joe Ecclesia

Fax for Pax

Your Excellency:

Recently you offered Mass at our church. In your homily, which was quite inspirational, you urged parishioners to avail themselves more frequently of the Sacrament of Penance.

Believe it or not, Your Excellency, I try to go to Confession every month or so. As you stated in your homily, frequent confession helps us all in our battle against sin. Recently, however, I have felt uncomfortable confessing to our parish priests. Part of what I need to confess is my anger with these gentlemen over various issues: They have, for instance, made the Sunday Mass their version of a comedy club, and, since the younger of the two changed the words of the Eucharistic prayer at the last Mass, I'm not even sure whether the consecration was licit. Given my reservations, I find it difficult to go to these priests in the confessional. With a few mortal sins on my soul, however, I needed to look somewhere for absolution if I wished to partake of the other Sacraments. (Unlike most Catholics, who, by all appearances, march triumphant and unstained by sin down the aisle each Sunday to partake of Our Lord's Body and Blood, I'm afraid that I sin quite frequently and even enjoy it at times.)

I first turned to a large church nearby, with some newly appointed priests. The church secretary—a very genial woman—asked me to suggest several convenient times for Confession and then told me that the priest would check his schedule and would match one of my convenient times to one of his convenient times. I tried to call the next week to leave my convenient times, failed to reach the correct secretary, and later simply dropped by the rectory while on errands in that city. The priest was in the building and was available—the genial secretary told me so—but he couldn't see me without an appointment.

In the meantime, a priest substituted at our church one day when I happened to attend daily Mass. It was a First Friday, when we have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and special prayers following morning Mass. *Aha*, thought I, *here's my chance!* I'll see this priest right after the spoken prayers, make my confession, perform my penance, and be once again clean as—well, not clean as the driven snow, perhaps, but at least, as Tallulah Bankhead once put it, clean as the driven slush.

Unfortunately, the priest didn't tarry for the prayers. He darted from the church while the rest of us were still on our knees. I'm sure his haste was justified—he was doubtless dashing off to somewhere important—but his rapid departure left me once again bereft of Confession.

And so here I am, Your Excellency, walking around sorry for my sins but unable to find a confessor. I thought about e-mailing my confession to you, but I decided that wouldn't do. I might add that I am making a trip soon, driving our daughter home from college. Should I happen to die out there on the asphalt, unshriven and alone, I ask for your prayers.

Given my dilemma, which I assume others like me have encountered, I came up with an idea. Why not direct all the priests of the diocese to sit in confessional booths 30 minutes before each Mass? You could kill two or even three birds with this single stone. You could make Confession readily available. You could encourage Confession. You might even give your priests a half-hour of rest each day, if no one came to Confession. Since I assume that our priests are supposed to talk to Our Lord somewhere between balancing the budget and getting the rectory gutters cleaned, you would also be providing them with a golden opportunity for contemplation and prayer.

Unfortunately, this suggestion may prove too great a hardship on our priests. When I mentioned my idea to the president of our parish council, she snorted and said, "The boys would never go for that!" She then proceeded to tell me that she had gone to Saturday afternoon Confession as a girl 60 years ago and that she saw no reason why people couldn't go on Saturdays today.

So let me offer another idea for your consideration. How about a fax line for Confession? We could print the fax number for Confession in all the parish bulletins, station a priest in a diocesan office with the fax machine, and have Confession available around the clock. Parishioners could fax in their confession and an Act of Contrition, and the priest could fax back absolution. Judging from the line for Saturday night Confession at our parish, this priest would not be especially busy. If he became overburdened, the diocese could simply provide him with a standard form for absolution. Special cases could be remanded to the parish priest. To attract attention, we might call it *Fax for Pax*.

Such an option might also make more Catholics aware of the nature of sin, Your Excellency. Comparing the length of the Communion lines on Sunday morning with the length of the confessional line on Saturday night, an impartial observer would conclude that Catholics are either the most perfect of God's people or the most ignorant. Since the latter option strikes me as closer to the mark—many of my fellow Catholics apparently feel that the only sin left is murder, and, even there, they would doubtless make allowances if you were a nice guy and shot a decent game of golf—we might use Fax for Pax to inform people that the old-fashioned sins of gossip, slander, covetousness, lusting in your heart after your neighbor, failing to honor God, and all the rest are still in play as rules of the game.

Take it into consideration, Your Excellency! Keeping you in my prayers,

Joe Ecclesia

Letter From the Drug War

by Brian Kirkpatrick

The Town I've Never Seen

I shouldn't have been surprised; I'd heard similar stories from my wife. But the more dramatic stories had always involved someone I didn't know. This was a seven-year-old girl giving an eyewitness account at

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the dinner table.

"The guerrillas came to Aunt Lucy's house and told her to fix supper for thirty people," my stepdaughter said, in response to nothing in particular.

I must have done a comical double take. "Did your aunt do it?"

"Yes," she said, as she tore a piece of bread.

"Did the guerrillas show up?"

"They came to eat."

She was so matter-of-fact, so calm. This was just another story to her.

"She fed the soldiers?" I asked. It was not a brilliant question, but I was still struggling with my astonishment.

My stepdaughter wrinkled her nose with amusement. "They weren't soldiers! They didn't have helmets!"

"Were you scared?" I asked.

"No. Mommy, why does he call them soldiers?"

"They were soldiers," my wife said.

My stepdaughter shook her head. "They were wearing caps, not helmets."

I knew whom she was talking about, even if she didn't know what to call them. The soldiers she had seen belonged to FARC—las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—the bigger of the two communist guerrilla groups that have kept Colombia in a state of smoldering civil war for 40 years.

My stepdaughter's aunt lives in Anolaima, a town two hours outside of Bogota. My wife and stepdaughter were both born in Bogota, but my wife has dozens of aunts, uncles, and cousins in Anolaima. For some reason, my mother-in-law is the central sibling of 12 brothers and sisters, the queen bee of her generation. My wife holds that position in her own age group. My stepdaughter has the same status among her many cousins, even though she now lives on another continent.

My stepdaughter popped another grape into her mouth. "They came at 12:30 and left at 3:30."

"What did they do while they were there?" I asked.

"They ate. Some of them were just twelve years old, but they had mean faces."

"I bet."

I asked her more questions, but she didn't have anything to add. Seven-year-olds aren't investigative reporters. Later, my wife explained that the soldiers had come to the church where her uncle is the pastor. They ate and then they left, but they returned in the evening and kept the family captive overnight. My wife's relatives were terrified, especially as one of the older soldiers kept eyeing the 13-year-old daughter, but the next day the guerrillas left for good. Within a month, soldiers—probably the same ones that Aunt Lucy fed—executed another family that had fed an anti-FARC paramilitary group. It didn't matter that the murdered family had no more choice about feeding their unwelcome guests than my wife's relatives had when FARC showed up.

For 20 years, when Americans have thought about Colombia, they have thought of the international drug trade. A few years ago, our journalists liked to write about the Rodriguez Orejuela clan in the southern Colombian city of Cali. Later, Medellin's Pablo Escobar, the sometime member of the Colombian national assembly, briefly held our attention. Now, much of the cocaine and marijuana trade belongs to FARC, ELN, the other major insurgency—or, I should say, the other crime syndicate—and the right-wing paramilitary organizations that developed in response to the first two groups. The two rebel groups claim that poverty and oppression are the root causes of their war, but the truth is that the drug trade gives them enough money to buy the guns, jeeps, food, and medical supplies that make them so formidable.

Several times, the guerrillas have stopped my wife on the road to Anolaima. They stop everyone: Cocaine brings in more money, but kidnapping is another strong revenue stream. One of my wife's stories is about the rich man from Anolaima whom FARC shot just outside of town. They didn't let anyone come close enough to bury him for days. Because of such stories, FARC doesn't have to kidnap you to make money; extortion makes a nice profit, too. Most Colombians who are threatened are understandably inclined to pay up.

We Americans play a role in my wife's stories about Anolaima. As long as our country has a voracious appetite for cocaine and marijuana, someone will sell them to us. If the drugs are illegal, the price will be high, and men like the leaders of FARC will do whatever they have to do to get a share of the money. Much of our own violent crime is the result of illegal drugs and the money that surrounds them, but cocaine also feeds and arms FARC's soldiers. We pay for the guns carried by the boys with caps.

Not all of my wife's Anolaima stories are sad. My favorites are about the party that's held every New Year's Eve in the town square, where the people gather to dance all night. Anolaima has the same weather all year round—eternal spring—so an open-air party on New Year's, which would sound foolish here in Baltimore, makes sense there.

I'd love to see Anolaima, but I can't go there. It's too dangerous. I might make it home if FARC got their hands on me, but it would be months later, after I had raised thousands of dollars in ransom. It's more likely that I would die in the mountains at the hands of a 12-year-old with a mean face. And as I looked at the gaping hole in the end of the gun barrel, I would wonder which American had paid for the bullet.

Brian Kirkpatrick writes from Baltimore, Maryland.

Letter From London

by Andrei Navrozov

A Northern Light

◆

Living in Italy, as I have done for some years, may result in an incremental loss of the vivid sensation, in my view all but indispensable in a writer, that the world as a whole is a barbarous place. It is then that I feel I must go back to London, to immerse myself afresh in the savage and godless existence that I seek to describe, to gamble side by side with my socially brutalized hero, and to cheer him on even as I watch him thrashing about within the vicious circle of cosmopolitan heartlessness, cultural sterility, and northerly frustration. For the unhappy personage whom I call the "poet player" is, after all, something of my own alter ego, my approximate kith and vaguely recognizable kin. I cannot but experience his predicament as my life's own.

Western civilization, which conceived itself in the primordial sunlight of the Mediterranean, can be explained to a visitor from another planet as an infinity of variations on a single theme, and that theme is fertility. This means that every flower, both literally and figuratively, will some day turn to fruit, which will then, as a general rule, come to ripen; that every undertaking, whether individual or communal, whether of the body or of the

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soul, will be seen by and by to seasonal fruition; and that culture, in animals as in men, with plants as with peoples, is nothing if not such affirmation, complication, and deepening of what is already present in nature.

The poet player is, alas, a northern phenomenon. Had he been raised in Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey, or Egypt, he would not have looked to roulette nor ever wished to search for any other purgatory, just as his plebeian compatriots, had they been born to the Mezzogiorno, would not have needed to pass the time by leafing through illustrated magazines with titles like *Asian Babes* or, in extreme cases, by dismembering pale schoolgirls in mildewed basements of suburban houses. A child of the fructiferous south respects the elements and comprehends the natural ways of the flesh because everything around him, from the cradle's edge to the blue horizon of the sea, is an object lesson in the doctrine; from personal and intimate observation, he knows how the fragrant blossoms of a roadside tree become almonds and appreciates the beauty of the process, its immanent rhythm, and the precision of its calendar.

To be born a northerner, by contrast, is to accept abiding frustration as your psychological portion. Everything around you points to abortion or deviation of life's natural processes, and the object lesson of your childhood, inevitably, is that flowers remain flowers until they wilt and drop off; that ripe fruit comes refrigerated or out of tins; and that beauty, culture, and refinement may be disconnected from fertility—in fact, are better off being disconnected from it. In the school of sensibility that is the natural world, hops, parsnips, and potatoes are only a mocking and dysfunctional substitute for grapes, olives, and almonds; thus, it is simply wrong to suppose that, when the German poet gives vent to his longing for "the land where the lemons bloom," his feelings of deprivation are even remotely gastronomic.

Rather like the American South before the Civil War, Southern Europe is not more joyful because it is more backward. To the contrary, it is less progressive because it is less depressive—that is to say, less hypocritically God-abiding and more in sympathy with both the aesthetics and the ethics of Creation, indeed as unwilling to distinguish between the two as it is reluctant to decouple efflorescence from fructification. Thus, the sterile "industrialized North" is rendered speechless, mute with stirring resentment and half-remembered envy, when the fecund "wretched South" holds up such universally sacred symbols as oil and wine, or bread and salt, or figs and medlars, and places them as quotidian realities upon a pauper's table. For what in the world can the northerner answer back with? With heroin? Parking tickets? Newspaper columns?

One is almost moved to say that, in the Mezzogiorno, every fruit of the earth is the fruit of innocence, an antidote to the poisoned fruit of the tree of eternal discontent that is the accursed genealogy of the man of reason. To bite into a perfectly ripe peach is to step into a time machine, capable of transporting even a Zurich financier back to Eden. Conversely, the sermon, the novel, and even the poem are but ineffectual shadows of moral action beside the persimmon, the pomegranate, and the laurel.

In Palermo one night last week, I watched all nine hours of *The Godfather* on television, noting for the first time the recurrent image of fresh fruit that runs through the series. It is as an image I know well from the Vucciria, the Capo, and the Ballarò, Palermo's remaining street markets, where it is still easy to spot a well-dressed man pick up an exceptionally lustrous tangerine or a particularly well-shaped pear as he goes about his business and stroll on with only a nod or a wink to the vendor. It is as though, by tacit agreement between all parties, such fruit were some symbolic umbilicus, some mysterious remnant of the social cord that once bound nature to nurture, ancestors to descendants, and is now, increasingly, even in the south of Italy (to say nothing of the streets of New York), but a beguiling memory.

I have already written that just as the poet player's political program is the killing of money—and hence the abasement of the world which has given it value—his spiritual motive is the thirst for manifest miracle, a thirst which he finds all but unquenchable by any less self-destructive means. Here, I want to underscore that both of these impulses act only in opposition to, and in the context of, the industrial societies of Northern Europe, as well as such nations elsewhere as have become great and powerful by adopting their way of life. For what is money to a Greek fisherman, who would never exchange his own freshly caught red mullets for a handful of coins whose only prospective use, after all, is the acquisition of frozen cod fillets in the local supermarket? And what is the wonder of the winning number, even if it should pay out at 35 to 1, compared to the wonder of a whole Agrigento of almond trees in full bloom?

A northerner's embittered "Listen, if he doesn't like it over here, why doesn't he just bloody well leave?" does not make for a sound political argument. Nor does it convince the poet player to quit the industrial wasteland of his sad playgrounds and move to the fertile south, there to lick wounds, to recover from ever-fresh losses, and to dream of long-lost winnings, thus winding down a misspent life amid orange blossoms and freshly baked sesame loaves. Like his plebeian compatriots, the poet player is self-condemned, as he chooses to take his stand against the society whose monstrous strength, and still stronger hubris, he despises and wants to see uprooted or cut down. For he can well say, echoing the Russian thinker Berdyayev, that man's quest for liberty is not so much a matter of broad social movements as of individual acts of rebellion against the power of the mass.

Like the chevalier des Grieux, the hero of Prevost's *Manon Lescaut*, the poet player is ever at a crossroads, or, more precisely, at that intersection defined by the 19th-century mathematician Antoine Cournot, in his rebuttal of Laplace's wholesale dismissal of chance, as the totally random point of contact between two distinct and independent causal series. One such series of events stems from his understanding that the cold occidental world, the loveless world he inhabits, is a barbarous place, where endless frustration awaits him; the other stems from his refusal to transplant himself to the other world that he suspects exists, to a world full of citrus and wine and myrrh, to the birthplace of innocence.

"Why call the world a place of suffering," asks Des Grieux, "when it can provide a life of such charming delights?" To be near his beloved Manon as she is being deported for prostitution, he must pay to the convoy guards the terrible price that they name as one ecu per hour, at that time the going rate in Paris for women of easy virtue. So, too, must the poet player pay an equally terrible price, as he walks past the liveried doormen into the place of suffering.

And there I follow him, as a martyrologist might.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Exiting Iraq

It is sometimes necessary for a great power to keep a distant small country under military occupation—if need be, for a very long time. The Romans could not contemplate an "exit strategy" from Palestine in the first century A.D.—or from a few other hotspots around the empire's outer perimeter—without compromising their status as the world's feared and respected hegemon. The British did not enjoy keeping the northwest frontier under a precarious and costly control for over a century, but it had to be done if India was to be safe for the empire. The Red Army had to maintain large garrisons in East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia; otherwise the "Socialist Community" would have disintegrated decades before the fall of the Wall.

Quite apart from the long-term weakness or folly of those strategic designs *per se*—in the end, India was a millstone around an enfeebled England's neck, and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact heralded the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself—the presence of those powers' troops in foreign lands made sense *at the time* within the terms of the political-military doctrines that guided their decisionmakers. The *Pax Romana*, Lord Rosebery's "sane Imperialism," the Brezhnev Doctrine: Those concepts did possess a degree of clarity and coherence within their own frames of reference, and they provided the basis for a "rational" calculus in determining policies.

As weeks of the American occupation of Iraq turn into months, there is little clarity and even less coherence in the Bush administration's rationale for the costly and increasingly unpopular coda to Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is unclear if the troops are there to build democracy, to create the stability needed for the Iraqis to build their political institutions themselves, or simply to impose a preordained *Pax Americana*, by whatever means and in whatever timeframe. Statements by top political figures allow for all of those possibilities.

On July 1, President George W. Bush talked of transforming Iraq into "an example of moderation and democracy and prosperity" as a legitimate military-political objective of the United States. He warned that it will be a "massive and long-term undertaking." An early U.S. exit is no longer contemplated, but the effort is worthwhile, and the objective, attainable.

The top U.S. official in Baghdad, Paul Bremer, was significantly less circumspect only days earlier, when he declared that American soldiers would *fight*, and *impose their will*, or *capture*, or *kill* all those who oppose them, "until we have imposed law and order on this country." Mr. Bremer has put talk of a transitional government on hold, and, instead, plans a process of "consultation" over a new constitution that may take years. "We dominate the scene," he asserted, "and we will continue to impose our will on this country." Mr. Bremer is less specific regarding the purpose of the dominance and imposition: "We've made a lot of progress but there is a long way to go . . . We did have a plan. The problem is that it's very difficult to execute the plan."

For his part, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld dismissed the suggestion that the United States is in an Iraqi quagmire. He was adamant that we are not facing a new Vietnam, and he asserted that the GIs are not fighting a guerrilla war. He preferred to compare the U.S. military occupation in Iraq to the American Revolution and the outcome of the war to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

Whatever the rationale for the occupation, Gen. John Abizaid, the new commander of the Iraq mission, told Congress simply that the military will remain there "for the foreseeable future." Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar went one better when he declared, upon returning from a visit to Baghdad, that "the idea that we will be in just as long as we need to and not a day more" is obsolete: "[W]e've got to get over that rhetoric. It is rubbish! We're going to be there a long time."

The corollary of Mr. Lugar's assurance is that the United States will remain in Iraq longer, perhaps much longer, than is necessary. The breathtaking idiocy of advocating unneeded missions notwithstanding, the obvious question is, How do we define the "need"?

If we pretend that the purpose of the war was to "disarm Iraq," the mission has resulted in a resounding victory. Whether Saddam destroyed his "weapons of mass destruction" in the nick of time—just to make sure that they would not be used against the Marines closing in on Baghdad—or whether they had not been there to start with, the important fact is that they were never a threat to anyone. The United States, her regional friends and allies, and Iraq's neighbors can all breathe a sigh of relief, and the Americans should go home. Whether the liberated Iraqis subsequently indulge in "chaos," in responsible nation-rebuilding, or in some intermediate form of political discourse is immaterial to the war's purpose and to the measure of its success.

If the primary purpose of the war was to replace the regime in Baghdad, it is also possible to declare victory and to leave the place to its own devices. Saddam is either dead or in hiding. Even if he is alive, his reemergence on the scene is unlikely, certain to be resisted by the new authorities, and would be easy to deal with. In the aftermath of the Americans' departure, Iraq will either stay together or disintegrate into three (or more) units, with no discernible impact on the security interests of the United States. "Iraq" is not a nation-state, even less a defined polity that needs a strong dose of American political and economic models of the good life. The goals, challenges, and expectations of its ethnic and religious groups are not reducible to a common denominator. Three different Ottoman provinces of old have never forged a sense of common destiny or common nationhood. Being an "Iraqi" does not come before one's Shia or Kurdish or tribal-clannish identity.

Even if we allow for the possibility that Washington is seriously determined—for whatever reasons—to maintain the fic-

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tion of that artificial state's integrity, the occupation is unnecessary and counterproductive. The United States can use all sorts of financial, legal, and political carrots and sticks to keep the external framework of a Shiite-Sunni-Kurdish "Iraqi" federation, while allowing each group to get on with its preferred form of self-rule. The threat of the Turk will be enough to contain excessive Kurdish ambitions. The prospect of an Iranian-style Allah-ocracy in the south is not only real but imminent, and the presence of American soldiers in Karbala will only make it more zany than it is likely to be anyway. Iraq is precarious: Having U.S. soldiers on the ground for years or decades will not prevent an nonviable polity's disintegration once the troops depart. Not having them in Iraq at all will allow the dynamics of a long-stifled political process to unfold unhindered.

If the war was primarily, albeit not exclusively, about oil—a reasonable supposition, considering that Iraq has 17 percent of the world's known reserves—then it is indeed necessary to retain direct, physical control of the wells, both in the Shiite south, in northwestern areas around Mosul, and in the Kurdish-controlled north. For the American political elite to seek exclusive U.S. drilling concessions and 99-year leases (not to mention infrastructure reconstruction contracts) and to want their assets guarded by an American or "allied" armed force is amoral and cynical but by no means irrational.

In this case, it is prudent to uphold regional centrifugal—and even outrightly separatist—forces and to deal with the successor regimes on a piecemeal basis. It is certainly undesirable to promote "democracy" in the fragmented successor-entities, as it would inevitably bring to the fore unpleasant demagogues—Islamic fanatics or nationalist populists—who would clamor for the oil money to be distributed to "the people" and for the Yankees to go home. It is far wiser to encourage the political supremacy of time-tested clannish cliques—*à la* Kikritis and traditional tribal hierarchies—as they are cheaper to buy. In this scenario, it is certainly not necessary to garrison and patrol Baghdad and other densely populated urban centers. They will be kept dependent on the masters' benevolence.

The wells, the pipelines, and Iraq's sole deep-water port can be secured with one Marine division and some additional specialist elements, probably not exceeding 30,000 men. The model exists in the Wehrmacht's redeployment in Yugoslavia in 1943-44: Having realized the futility of playing bloody hide-and-seek with Mihailovic's Chetniks and Tito's Partisans across the wastelands of Bosnia and Montenegro, the Germans abandoned the hinterland and stuck to the areas that matter: 500 miles of coastal roads, a thousand miles of strategic railways, Herzegovinian bauxite mines, and the granaries of the Panonian plain.

If President Bush is serious about transforming Iraq into "an example of moderation and democracy and prosperity"—possibly as a first step in the grand design of "bringing democracy" to the Middle East—then we are dealing with a serious problem. The culture-altering Iraqi experiment will surely fail and yield no benefit to the United States. A realistic attachment to the American interest has the potential to realize moral purposes, while the American exceptionalist obsession with transforming societies is a no-win situation.

Besides the impossibility of a serious national-security strategy based on neo-Wilsonianism, the political culture of the Middle East is sick, delusional, tyrannical, and violent. The root cause of this disaster is Islam and the spiritual, moral, political, and economic desert that the legacy of Muhammad has produced for the past 13 centuries. The lack of democracy in all societies affected by the collective psychosis known as Islam is patently secondary to the fundamental problem. Reciting praises to the Religion of Peace and Tolerance, while simultaneously seeking to battle its consequences, is delusional and irresponsible.

If "democracy" is the goal, then disbanding the Iraqi army was a breathtaking blunder. Telling hundreds of thousands of unemployable young men—many still armed to the teeth—that they should go home (*sans* pay, pension, and benefits) is an unexpected boon to those seeking recruits for an anti-American guerrilla force. Most would have been happy to serve the new masters; many would have sought promotion by denouncing unreliable friends and colleagues and spying on would-be saboteurs. In the meantime, according to the U.S. military, only a few hundred small arms have been collected following an appeal to the citizens of Iraq to hand over their weapons. An overwhelming majority of several million weapons distributed among the people before the war remains privately owned; a Kalashnikov can be bought in Baghdad for less than $20.

It is possible that the purpose of our continued occupation of Iraq has nothing to do with the American interest. Behind the rhetoric, the alibis, justifications, and lies, some very powerful people in Washington, and their influential partners abroad, may desire to keep American troops in Iraq in order to effect permanent changes in the strategic balance in the region for the benefit of Israel.

That this factual statement—based on ample empirical and anecdotal evidence—is dangerous to utter testifies to the sorry state of public debate in the United States. The possibility that the war in Iraq was all about Israeli security may also explain the remarkable bipartisan unanimity on WMD's—an issue that, in another universe, could have developed into an almost impeachable problem for President Bush. As a seasoned Washingtonian insider explained,

> The Democrats knew the war would be good for Israel, and Israel wanted it. And they knew the American people would go along. So on both principle and politics, it was a no-brainer. The only reasons left to be antiwar were antagonism toward Bush and genuine concern for the danger of the endeavor, but when did that ever matter much in politics? Both sides had been committed to a certain view of Saddam Hussein since the first Gulf War, and nobody stood to gain anything by challenging that view.

Those who wanted the war for reasons kept from the American public do not see the occupation of Iraq as the end of their assignment. They are intent on a thorough reconstruction of the Middle Eastern political architecture, with its next stage—the Iranian reactor crisis—set to coincide with the collapse of the "Road Map" next winter. Watch this space. ◁

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WAR

Whose Side Is God On?

by Marian Kester Coombs

Does God take sides in conflicts between men? If He does, how can we tell? Is the side favored by God always victorious, or can a lost cause also have been blessed?

Bob Dylan mocked the very notion of God taking sides in human warfare:

> Accept it with pride,
> For you don't count the dead
> When God's on your side . . .
> The Germans now too
> Have God on their side . . .
> You never ask questions
> When God's on your side . . .

He concludes that "If God's on our side / He'll stop the next war."

Muslims believe that their own political and military interests are identical to those of Allah. This is the boon of theocracy: With no separation of mosque and state, Allah cannot help but be on the side of an Islamic government, no matter which way it decides to jump.

At the other end of the spectrum lies traditional Christianity. There was a time when the Christian God rode high, leading His soldiers into battle and onward to victory. The stunning success of the Christian West in engulfing all the continents of the earth seemed proof that its God must be not only paramount but beaming genially upon the labors of His children.

Certainly, this was the lesson learned by those engulfed, from Hawaii, where "the greatness of your Christian god" was ritually acknowledged, to North America, where the European invaders' fearsome weapons, immeasurable riches, and miraculous resistance to diseases that wiped out the natives were all seen as proofs of their god's superiority. In the great story of the European "encounter" with indigenous peoples the world over, there were a thousand tragic moments when the old gods faltered and fell silent, leaving their worshipers defenseless. To most peoples, defeat meant either that their gods had deserted them or that the enemy's god was a more powerful being, to whom they must now bow down.

Worship of the LORD Sabaoth, the God of victory in battle—He whose saving Arm avails us when the foe assails us, to quote "Rock of Ages"—remains in the anthems and official poetry of most nations. Anthems are usually patriotic *hymns*; God is identified with the nation, and both are worshiped together. Thus, England's "God Save the King":

> O Lord our God, arise,
> Scatter thine enemies
> And make them fall.
> Confound their politics,
> Frustrate their knavish tricks:
> On Thee our hopes we fix—
> God save us all!

Likewise Russia's national anthem:

> And should dread war arise,
> Stretch forth Thy Hand,
> To guard from wicked foes
> Our dear, dear land.

And Japan's:

> God of valor, God of war,
> Let our arms forevermore
> Vanquish foes—ever those
> Who oppress the weak and poor!
> RIGHT IS MIGHT! FIGHT FOR RIGHT!
> Hail, Japan!

"The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "America," and "America the Beautiful" are psalms to a land seen as divinely authored by virtue of its virtuous people and the beauty of its terrain. These songs preserve the ancient belief that gods dwelt physically in one's own territory—occupying particular caves, rivers, groves of trees, mountaintops. Long ago, all gods were tribal, your own *ethnos* writ large and set dancing across the heavens. Certain tribal gods, however, have managed to survive into the modern world.

By now, most Westerners have learned to distrust heady talk of divine inspiration and "God's will." For many Christians, the revelations of philosophy, anthropology, and psychology have forever demystified the workings of man's religious "tic." They have studied too closely "comparative religion"; they see too clearly the "many faces of God."

In any case, the God of Christianity is associated with peace and peacemakers. Christ counseled love and forbearance in all things. The source of conflict in earthly life is Satan, who thrives upon ire and vengeance, bloodlust and force. The Christian doctrine of "just war" is thus purely defensive: If Satan has inspired your neighbor to transgress upon the God-given substance of your people, you are morally justified in using just enough force to resist the transgression.

Just-war doctrine imposes the moral imperative of finding a *casus belli* before declaring war. "He hit me first!"—therefore I smite him back in righteousness. "Interference with the full exercise of a nation's rights or independence, an affront to its dignity, an unredressed injury, are instances of *casus belli*," according to the quaint 1911 edition of Encyclopedia Britannica.

The right to defend oneself is still universally recognized and is enshrined in even the more self-abnegating religions (except Jainism). But some religions do not abhor or abjure violence. Allah relishes a good fight, as long as his adherents win. The Koran is a standing order to make war upon the infidel. Shiva the Destroyer, the Hindu god of creative destruction whose dancing sustains the cosmos, loves carnage and chaos, as does Kali, the Black One, drunk on the blood of her victims.

Sikhism was born of a desperate attempt to reconcile Hindu and Muslim precepts and has succeeded only in becoming another combatant on the killing fields of the subcontinent. Shintoism, Japanese ancestor worship, incorporates the idea that the emperor is of divine origin, which removes all doubt as to whose side the gods are on once hostilities commence. Confucianism is mainly an ethical system based on the Chinese social hierarchy, but it has many shrewd and practical things to say about the conduct of war. Taoism and Zen Buddhism, teaching the great "way" of Heaven, are both highly adaptable to military strategy and the martial arts: "One who excels as a warrior does not appear formidable; One

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who excels in fighting is never roused in anger . . . " (Lao-tse, *Tao te Ching*, Book Two, LXVIII).

Victory is often viewed as the criterion of which side God was on. The Allied nations' Nuremberg tribunal declared that "War is essentially an evil thing" and then proceeded to accuse the losers of waging a "war of aggression" which was still *more* evil. The victors write not only history but theology: Our side stood for Good; their side, for Evil. The greatest "war crime" of all is to have lost.

Is there never a case where God *enjoins* us to fight in His Name against a certain evil? Are there some causes so holy that mere preaching, praying, and proselytizing are not enough and violence is called for? Between peoples both professing Christianity, we need look no further than the Civil War for such a scenario. The war was fanned to flame by religiously inspired antislavery agitators, beginning with Harriet Beecher Stowe and Julia Ward Howe and ending with John Brown and Lincoln himself. "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free, / While God is marching on."

Interestingly, John Wilkes Booth's "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" invoked not Christ but the ancient Roman republic; and the Lost Cause is revered even today not for religious but for familial, regional, sentimental, constitutional, and aesthetic reasons.

Some belief systems, then, are spoiling for a fight. Nationalism, rooted in the instinctive preference for kin, became a quasireligious force in the course of the 18th century, a trend that only intensified in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nations, self-deified and convinced of enemy perfidy, have hurled themselves at one another repeatedly, seeking that final, vindicating victory.

God as the instigator of war is hardly dead, however. He has risen again in the current conflict between the United States and the Muslim world—on both sides. Georgie Anne Geyer, in her column of March 9, reports that "the president of the United States of America sees himself as part of God's divine plan. For America, for the Middle East, for the world." Bush has become "gripped by the idea that he [is] the man chosen to liberate the Middle East." Evangelicals spout sentiments like those found in a Religious Freedom Coalition newspaper ad:

> The very presence of evil gives the righteous the right and the responsibility to place their armies upon the field. As the barbaric Taliban met defeat . . . so then will God bless the forces of the United States in freeing the world's peoples from the fear of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, weapons that a satanically driven leader such as Saddam Hussein would indeed use.

Bush is surrounded, moreover, by people who openly speak and write of fulfilling Israel's biblical destiny through the use of American force. The messiah of Zion will be incarnated in the Holy Land in time for the End of Days, Armageddon, the final salvation of the Jewish people. The Horsemen are assembling for their rendezvous with mankind; the Apocalypse draws nigh. Orthodox Judaism is rivaled only by Islam in its vision of God standing astride the whole world. As one follower of the extremist Israeli settler movement Gush Emunim rhapsodized, "When I saw the planes ram the World Trade Center, I praised God, I knew that the Redeemer's coming was near!"

Whom to fight, when to fight and why—how simply these questions are answered in a fantasy like *The Lord of the Rings*. There, in Middle-earth, Sauron bends his will to completely evil, inhumanly cruel ends. Along with his satrap Saruman, he unleashes, in a hideous parody of Creation, two races of creature with not one shred of soul between them expressly to "destroy the world of men," "rick, cot and tree," "down to the last child." Self-defense against such forces is a sacred duty, not an agonizing choice.

So when William Murchison, a fine patriotic American full of right feeling, is moved to write that the Iraqis "are the Orcs" and "We are the elves and hobbits and dwarves and men of the West" (in a column of March 27), it is a sobering moment. War fever dehumanizes and demonizes the Enemy, and even Mr. Murchison has fallen prey to it. Evidently, too many people have forgotten how the "relativism" and "fuzzy internationalism" they ridicule originally arose: in the sickening aftermath of World War I, when the frenzy had worn off and the shock and shame had set in.

That global morning after destroyed the *joie de vivre* of a generation. For many, the purgative relativism progressed to nihilism and never could go home again.

The "clash of civilizations" is a clash of gods. "Evil" has no meaning outside a religious context. "Nations do not have friends, but interests," and it may equally be said that nations pursue not evil but their own interests, which may well seem barbarously evil to those who do not share them. We must pray that defeat never renders us "evil" and, thus, culpable for all the attentions we have visited upon the world.

Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Maryland.

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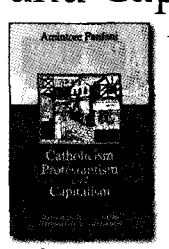

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by George McCartney

Waugh on Film

In 1929, Evelyn Waugh wrote that film was "the one vital art of the century," an accolade he would later qualify. While he came to believe that cinema had "taught [novelists] a new habit of narrative," he concluded that this was "perhaps . . . the only contribution [it was] destined to make to the arts."

Although Waugh provocatively overstates his case, I can see the partial justice of his observation. Just consider the screen adaptations of his novels. In almost every instance, his books are more genuinely cinematic than the films they have inspired. Adaptations of *The Loved One* (1965), *Brideshead Revisited* (1981), *Scoop* (1987), *A Handful of Dust* (1988), and *Sword of Honour* (2001) all have their merits, but, with the partial exception of *Handful*, none of them has the filmic verve of the original texts. Waugh's novels, especially the earlier ones, have the snap and flash of well-made films. They astonish us with the literary equivalents of breezy montages, splicing together the most unlikely images. In *Vile Bodies*, a young woman looks down on a weirdly miniaturized English landscape from a single-engine airplane and vomits into a paper bag; the next moment, we are at the bedside of another young woman dying from injuries sustained in a reckless car race through this same landscape. In *Handful of Dust*, we watch as a spoiled English aristocrat moistens her mascara by spitting into it; we are then plopped down into the Amazonian wilderness where Indian women prepare a fermented drink by chewing cassava roots and spitting the juices into a hollow tree trunk. Waugh delighted in abruptly linking the civilized with violence and savagery, suggesting that, beneath the daily surface of modern life, they were never far apart.

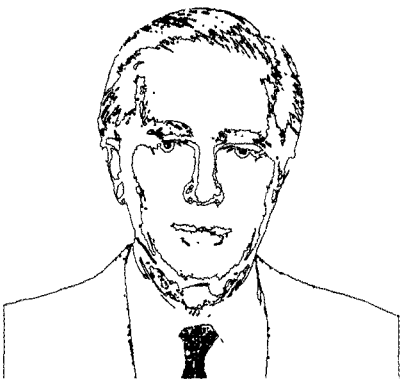
Waugh was also a master of the telling close-up. In *Decline and Fall*, he mocks the upperclass's tolerance of adultery with two "significant details," as he liked to call them. A middle-aged gentleman returns home one evening to discover the tall hat of his wife's young lover on the hall table. Lest he encounter the lothario on the staircase, he retreats to his library to smoke a cigar. When he finally hears the lover descend the stairs and let himself out the front door, the cuckold goes up to his wife, leaving behind his cigar smoldering in an ashtray. Without a word of explanation, Waugh tells us all we need to know with the contrast between the younger man's potently tall hat and the husband's discarded cigar.

Of all the films made of Evelyn Waugh's fiction, perhaps the one that least keeps pace with his cinematic imagination is "The High Green Wall," a teleplay based on Waugh's "The Man Who Liked Dickens." This is the 1933 short story that he would transform into the unsettling conclusion of his 1934 novel, *A Handful of Dust*, his most trenchant portrayal of Western man succumbing to the 20th century's barbarous assault on civilized values. In 1954, scriptwriter Charles Jackson and director Nicholas Ray adapted the narrative for *The General Electric Theater*, the weekly dramatic series hosted by Ronald Reagan, who was then learning from GE that "progress is our most important product," a lesson of inestimable value for the future politician.

This almost-forgotten 26-minute film has come to light once more as an exhibit in a retrospective of Ray's films that has been making the museum rounds in Canada and the United States. Ray directed the project the same year he made *Johnny Guitar* and a year before he made *Rebel Without a Cause*, the two films for which he is best known today.

Despite the odd decision to change the story's title, the adaptation follows Waugh's narrative quite closely, only omitting its opening few pages, which are concerned with protagonist Paul Henty's relations with his unfaithful wife—characters who would become Tony and Brenda Last in *Handful*. The teleplay begins abruptly with Paul stumbling sick and delirious upon an Indian tribe in the Amazon wilderness. Under the tribesmen's care, he is nursed back to health only to discover that their village's half-caste chief, Mr. McMaster (Mr. Todd in *Handful*), intends to hold him captive for the rest of his life.

I saw "High Green Wall" when it first aired. I was 12 at the time and had never heard of Waugh or Ray (not that I was inquisitive about matters of authorship then).



***The High Green Wall* (1954)**

Adapted for
The General Electric Theater
Columbia Broadcasting System
Directed by Nicholas Ray
Teleplay by Charles Jackson

When I came to read *Handful* 18 years later, I was surprised to rediscover in its ending the same story I had seen dramatized as a boy. I had never forgotten Paul Henty's fate at the hands of Mr. McMaster. The story's simple but bizarre conceit—a civilized man held captive in the Amazon and forced to read the complete works of Charles Dickens over and over to a sentimental savage—had made an ineradicable impression on me. Coming upon its literary source at 30, I experienced a slightly uncanny case of *déjà vu* that made the novel's ending all the more intense for me. So I was delighted to learn the film was going to be shown as part of a month-long Ray retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan.

Seeing the film again, however, was not at all the experience I had expected. My earlier enthusiasm seems to have misled me, for I found the production astonishingly dull. Ray, a self-important and decidedly limited filmmaker, must have been marking time between studio projects. His direction is perfunctory at best. There cannot be more than three camera setups, and the players seem to have been instructed to stand as close together as possible lest they break the boundaries of the drama's cramped, low-budget set, wanly festooned with plastic fronds to suggest, however skimpily, the Amazon forest. Joseph Cotten plays Paul Henty blandly, his expression alternating almost indistinguishably between weary bewilderment and wounded nobility. To be

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fair, the role as written does not afford many opportunities to do much else.

The film comes to life fitfully when Thomas Gomez appears as Mr. McMaster. Gomez plays his character quite broadly, creating a very credible obsessive with his unctuous smile and predatory eyes. He has an unnerving way of sidling up to Cotten at odd moments, his voice at once smarmy and wheedling like a particularly manipulative child who, discomfitingly, has the intimidating resources of a madly cunning adult—not to mention the loaded shotgun under his arm. When he first speaks of his passion for Dickens, his eyes fairly bulge with anticipation. It is clear that he will have his readings regardless of Paul's wishes. Unfortunately, the dramatization is so underwritten and the direction so indifferent that Gomez does not get to make good on these intimations of crazed villainy.

So what held my attention in 1954? As best I can piece together my initial impressions, there seem to have been four reasons I found the film so fascinating. First, the drama was radically different from just about anything else being aired at the time. There could not have been many television productions that would have allowed their protagonists' predicament to go so bleakly unresolved before the closing commercial. Second, a significant portion of this brief drama is taken up by Cotten reading *Bleak House* and *A Tale of Two Cities* to an enraptured Gomez. Cotten's deeply resonant voice and measured delivery gave the texts a stately heft I enjoyed. Charles Laughton had already trained me for such unadorned theatrics in the programs he started airing on American television in 1953 entitled, simply, *This Is Charles Laughton*. They consisted of nothing more than Laughton standing at a podium and reading stories into the camera. This disposed me to be patient with a drama that had no fights, gunfire, or chases to hold my boyish attention. (Perhaps I had a little of Mr. McMaster's mania myself.) A third factor may have been our family's 15-inch television screen, which made the drama's meager forest settings seem creepily claustrophobic to my susceptible imagination. Of course, on a full-size movie screen at the museum's theater, the film lost this accidental effect altogether. Fourth, there was the power of Waugh's original conception. After seeing the film, I was troubled intermittently for days, if not weeks. It seemed to me desperately unfair that a man as civilized and decent as Paul should be held captive for the rest of his life by a primitive madman. I found Paul's resignation to his fate very nearly a torment. Of course, this is just the effect Waugh wanted to achieve, especially with Paul's transformation into Tony Last in *A Handful of Dust*. Quite early on in *Handful*, Waugh makes the reader want to grab and shake Tony, to rouse his anger so that he will resist all the characters—most especially his wife—who take such scurrilous advantage of his decency. The Amazon episode is just the final and logical conclusion to which his frustrating passivity leads. My emotional response at 12 was not so very different from my feelings on first reading the novel as an adult. If this is not literarily sophisticated, so much the better. Waugh wanted his readers to feel Tony's fate viscerally before analyzing its significance.

I have no way of knowing whether Ray understood Waugh's intentions or even if he knew that "The Man Who Liked Dickens" evolved into *A Handful of Dust*. Nevertheless, Waugh's conception is so compelling that, despite the film's lackluster production, it is difficult not to react to it strongly. The museum audience included a large number of young people, undoubtedly college and graduate students. The film's early scenes provoked them to quiet snickering. I could not blame them. Blown up to theater-screen proportions, the gimcrack scenery and central-casting Indians looked quite ridiculous. As the narrative neared its conclusion, however, their tittering died out. I suspect they felt the horrible poignancy of Paul's fate, which is aptly enforced with the one truly imaginative shot in the otherwise pedestrian filming, a shot that suggests either that Ray may have understood what Waugh meant after all or that his cameraman had a happy accident. It appears just after Paul discovers McMaster has tricked the search party that has come to rescue him. Keeping Paul drugged and out of sight, the shrewd madman sends the searchers away believing that Paul is dead. With this revelation, the screen door to McMaster's house shuts in Paul's face, and we look at him in close-up standing behind its pale, nearly invisible mesh. Cotten stares out at us, devastated. Whether intended or not, the image is richly eloquent. It speaks not only of Paul's predicament but of his character. Even more pointedly, it speaks to the character he would become in *Handful*, for Tony, more clearly than Paul, is a man long trapped by nothing so much as his commitment to the restraints imposed on him by a flimsy code of manners, the gauzy remnants of the once-substantial tradition bequeathed him by his Christian ancestors. The image of Tony trapped behind a transparent screen perfectly expresses his failure to take this tradition seriously. When Mr. Todd asks him if he believes in God, he can only answer, "I suppose so. I never gave it much thought." Such a casually unreflective agnosticism, Waugh suggests, leads Tony ineluctably into a mapless moral wilderness. Long before his Amazon misadventure, Tony's lack of faith had prevented him from tearing away the veil of secular manners and combating the modern savagery that had invaded his life in England.

This single evocative moment hardly redeems the film. It does testify to Waugh's artistic strength, however. Even in careless hands, his caustic vision manages to unsettle us.

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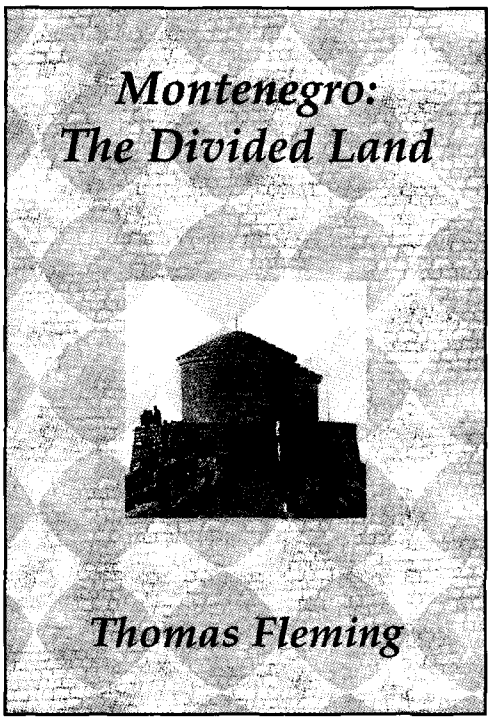
This Time, Be Prepared

The Serb land of Montenegro is once again at the crossroads of history. The blood-soaked mountains and dramatic coastline of this small land have been fought over by Illyrians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Turks, and Venetians, and, in the 20th century, by the armies of Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany. In World War II, Montenegro lost more men, per capita, than any nation of Europe, and now it is the latest target of the so-called international community, which has tried to create a phony separatist movement (complete with a bogus national church) to continue the disastrous policies that have involved the United States in wars over Bosnia and Kosovo.

Thomas Fleming has written the first well-researched history of Montenegro in the English language, taking the story from ancient times all the way up to the current crisis over separation from Serbia. This is no dry academic tome but a lively account of a brave people whose brave history rivals the tales of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae.



"Dr. Fleming has given us an unbiased history of our people that is compact yet thorough, with all the characteristics of a serious, well-documented, scientific study."

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Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences

"Dr. Fleming's book is a fascinating account of the heroic struggle of the Montenegrin people to defend their freedom and liberty against all odds. It tells their magnificent story in a stirring narrative that combines scholarly research with astute observation of how this tiny nation today may yet face its greatest challenge."

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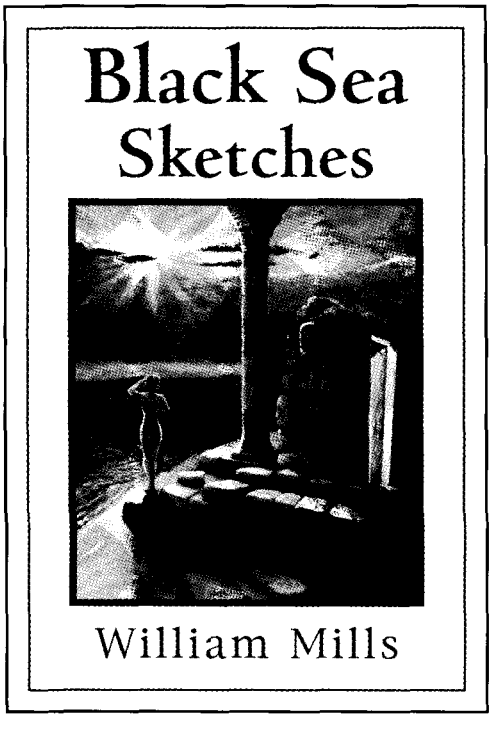
Black Sea Sketches

BLACK SEA SKETCHES is a travel book written for serious travelers, including armchair travelers. Although the author may take an occasional swim or walk the beaches, the book is much more about the history and prehistory, the culture and the contemporary scene than about recreational opportunities. It is the kind of book you would want to read before or during your own travel in these fascinating countries.

The five countries—Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Georgia—often share military and economic history, but cultural contrasts abound: different alphabets and languages, different religions. While most of Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Georgia embrace the Orthodox faith, Turkey is largely Muslim, as is part of the Crimean population. All five of the countries reflect, especially architecturally, the common past of ancient Greece and, most of them, of the later Genoan commercial empire.



Rising above the glittering monuments of the past, however, are the people Mills met and the stories of their lives, often of great courage under pressure and of generosity to a stranger and a traveler.

Comments about other works of William Mills

"William Mills' stories draw the reader deeply into the hearts and minds of men and women to reveal the essential nature of Man in a world governed by forces so primal there is no resisting their call, no mitigation of their judgment."

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[I]t is because the Serbians have been warlike that we have found it possible to be peaceful. If they are fierce it is because no courage short of sheer fanaticism could have kept the frontiers of Christendom against such locust-clouds of foes, while we were electing our first parliaments and building our first cathedrals. While all that we call the world was being made they were the wall of the world . . .

—G.K. Chesterton

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